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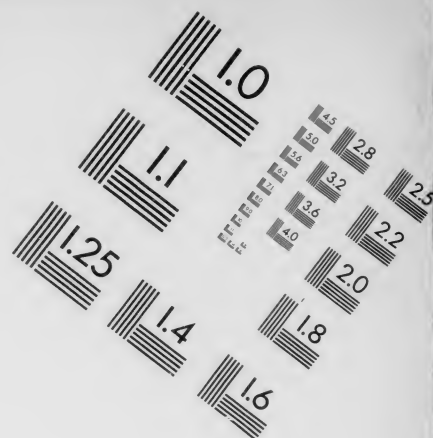
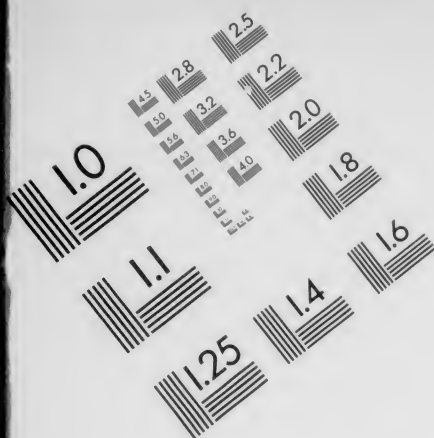
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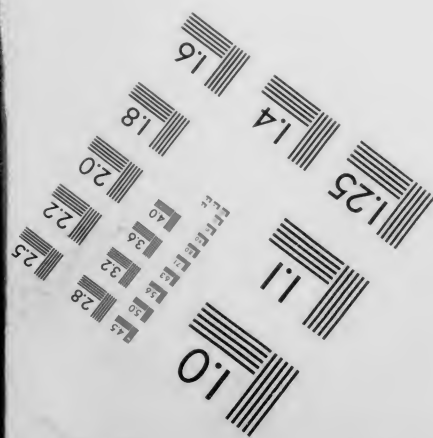
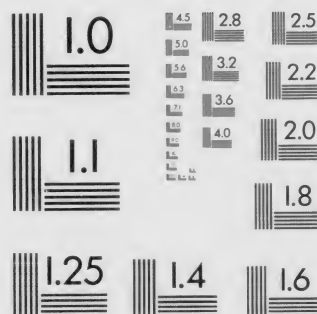
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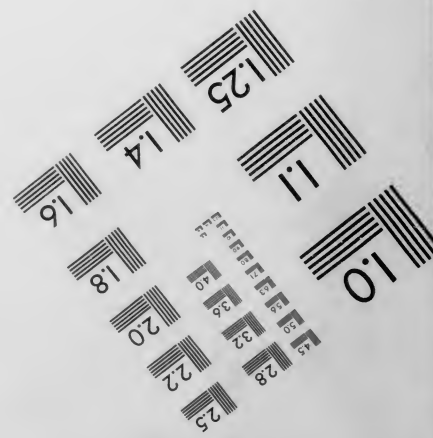
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THE ADVERSARIES OF THE SCEPTIC

THE
ADVERSARIES OF THE SCEPTIC
OR
THE SPECIOUS PRESENT

A NEW INQUIRY INTO HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

BY
ALFRED HODDER, Ph.D.



London
SWAN SONNENSCHN & CO., LTD
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1901.

Preface

THIS book aims at controverting certain current, or rather dominant, theories in regard to relations, judgment, reasoning, perception, and the unit of Ethics, and to substitute others in their stead. Much of it is destructive, but in no case has destruction been attempted except as a necessary preliminary to reconstruction. It is in some measure to be regretted that the men, whose doctrines the following pages directly oppose, are those to whom in matters philosophical I owe the greatest debt. If any word in the book can be found to imply a personal or professional disrespect, I beg beforehand to withdraw it and to substitute a word entirely colourless. To Professor Royce, in particular, I am indebted for the best formal instruction in Metaphysics that I have received; his seminary on Kant, at Harvard in the year 1891-2, has remained in the memory of the men who attended it as a model of what a seminary should be. To Mr. Bradley's books I am more deeply indebted than to those of any living author in Great Britain.

Upon the interest of the beginner in philosophy the book has in so far a claim, that the problems with which it deals are the central problems of Metaphysics, Logic and Ethics.

at the present time. It is upon the student's decision in regard to these problems that his decision in regard to current systems of Metaphysics, Logic and Ethics depends. It should be added that the statements of doctrines ultimately contested and rejected were elaborated almost without exception at a time when to me those doctrines seemed convincing, and those statements in all likelihood unanswerable.

The problems in Ethics here dealt with, it will be noted, are for the most part problems in Metaphysics also. The minuter problems in Ethics may with more advantage be treated in connection with the problems of Politics and of Æsthetics. The theory here set forth in regard to the *esse* of relations was published in the review of Mr. Bradley's "Appearance and Reality" in the "New York Nation"; the theory of judgment and reasoning was published in an article in the *Philosophical Review* Vol. v., No. 1; the substance of the chapter on "The Morality that Ought To Be" appeared in the *Philosophical Review* Vol. iii., No. 4; and "The Substance of The Morality That Is" and of "The Unit of Ethics" appeared in articles in the *International Journal of Ethics* Vol. vi., No. 3 and Vol. iii., No. 1; the first four chapters of the book as it stands and a portion of the sixth were accepted by the Faculty of Harvard College as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

ALFRED HODDER.

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PART FIRST.
—
THE METAPHYSICS
OF
THE SPECIOUS PRESENT.

THE SPECIOUS PRESENT.

CHAPTER I.

THE DILEMMA OF SCEPTICISM.

I.

SCEPTICISM, the writer upon metaphysics may with reason feel, is a leper among systems of philosophy; an honourably philistine ambition to enlist only the "good" names in the service of the "right" doctrine,—which is, of course, his own,—should admonish him at the outset to exclude the sceptic from the dialogue forever taking place in the silence of his chamber and tending always his own way. But a philistinism really honourable is loyal to its debt; and metaphysics, which is the last word of a dispassionate passion for intellectual completeness, may well be said to be, if not itself sceptical, the apotheosis, the transfiguration, of a single-minded regard for certitude that is in its essence one with doubt—with the habit of putting every item of our beliefs, without exception, sternly upon its justification.

THE SPECIOUS PRESENT.

CHAPTER I.

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I.

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And that too without dialectic hocus-pocus and sleight-of-hand, without substitution of "postulates" and "demands" for reasonings and proofs, and of hypotheses framed to satisfy "our whole nature" (whatever that may be) for an unswerving appeal to our sense of logic. "I admit, or rather I would assert," Mr. Bradley says, lending the authority of his name to a bad tradition, "that a result, if it fails to satisfy our whole nature, comes short of perfection. And I could not rest tranquilly in a truth if I were compelled to regard it as hateful. While unable, that is, to deny it, I should, rightly or wrongly, insist that the inquiry was not yet closed, and that the result was but partial. And if metaphysics is to stand, it must, I think, take account of all sides of our being. I do not mean that every one of our desires must be met by the promise of a particular satisfaction; for that would be absurd and utterly impossible. But if the main tendencies of our being do not reach consummation in the Absolute, we cannot believe that we have attained to perfection and truth." Mr. Bradley proposes, that is, deliberately and perhaps wrongly, ("rightly or wrongly"—the words are his), to assume that the universe is such and such, and then to "think up to it;" and Professor Royce dignifies this assumption (not with especial reference to Mr. Bradley, but generally) with the decorative epithet "courageous." The appetite for truth, it is argued, is simply a demand

like another; we have an appetite also for goodness, and an appetite for beauty; and it seems to be supposed by virtue of some celestial illogic to follow, that what satisfies our appetite for one of these must by a pre-established harmony satisfy our appetites for the others. But the appetite for truth is a demand, if a demand at all, precisely unlike any other, and the conditions which minister to it are markedly distinct from those which minister to our appetites for goodness and beauty; as reasonably might it be alleged that if a cloak can keep us warm it must by a pre-established harmony avail to still our hunger,—with the farther argument, to clinch the matter, that unappeased hunger, even within the shelter of a cloak, is "hateful." The specific demand of the intelligence is for matter of fact in all its evil and in all its ugliness, and for logic in its sheer implacability. An assumption is a flaw in a rounded metaphysics, and to call its introduction there a mark of courage,—openly and placidly, almost gaily, to carry the thing off, when one in fact has been at one's wits' ends to avoid assuming anything—is a stratagem that would be admirable only if metaphysics were a game of bluff and the universe a card-table. If it is deeply significant in metaphysics that we who have a craving for goodness and beauty should assume, perhaps against the weight of evidence, that the universe is beautiful and good, it can hardly be less significant

in metaphysics, the sceptic well may say, that people's ideas of beauty and goodness differ, and that either the same universe must be assumed to be both beautiful and ugly, good and bad, as many times over as there are conflicts of taste and opinion amongst the persons judging, or there must be assumed to be as many universes as there are intelligences. And if once we set our foot on the path of assumption, it is gratuitous self-abnegation to stop short of "particular gratifications"; Mr. Bradley's remark that not to stop short of particular gratifications would be absurd is, except for purposes of rhetoric, pointless simply; in the general abeyance of reason, one assumption is as absurd and as little absurd as another; shyness in positing, when the sole purpose in positing is to take for granted whatever is needed for our comfort, is as little commendable as shyness in wishing—is indeed but another name for the same thing. There is as much and as little ground to posit that the universe is champagne or opium or cigarettes, if you chance to like champagne or opium or cigarettes, as there is to posit that it is loveliness and virtue; loveliness and virtue beyond doubt are present in the universe—and so are other things. To the intellect it is plain that there is falsehood in the world, and ugliness, and moral evil; nay, even the supposed concomitance of the true, the beautiful, and the morally good, is intellectually—is it not?—a violence, a freak of

self-will simply. So far as we possess upon the subject any knowledge at all sufficient, there are facts that are evil; and actions that are righteous but unbeautiful; and beauties in the "imitative arts" to be achieved only by departure from the lines of what is or has been or even may be; and beauties in arts not imitative at all and insusceptible even metaphorically of the attribute of falsity or truth. Our appetites are not always satisfied nor always all satisfied together; to the intellect what is odious notwithstanding is; to be odious is to be. "If metaphysics is to stand, it must, I think," Mr. Bradley says, "take account of all sides of our being;" but it cannot for an instant stand, it cannot for an instant be regarded as satisfactorily taking account of the especial facet of our being with which it is primarily concerned, so long as it holds itself in readiness to exclude from its results, to shuffle out of sight, every item that it finds "hateful." "You mix things up, *chère madame*," the actress says in the novel, "and I have it on my heart to tell you so. I believe it is rather the case with you other English, and I have never been able to learn that either your morality or your talent is the gainer by it." To insist on our metaphysics being beautiful, and on our art being virtuous, and on our conduct being true, (whatever that may mean—though indeed it is no more in need of the transforming wand of metaphor than its predecessors),

is to aim at satisfying "our nature as a whole" by mortifying it successively in every part.

2.

But, the sceptic is certain to be told, we must consent to make assumptions somewhere. The least exigent of demonstrators must be granted his point of view, the least exigent of theorists must beg his final premises. "Thinking," Mr. Bradley declares, "is the attempt to satisfy a special impulse, and the attempt implies an assumption about reality. You may avoid the assumption so far as you decline to think, but, if you sit down to the game, there is but one way of playing. In order to think at all you must subject yourself to a standard, a standard which implies an absolute knowledge of reality; and while you doubt this you accept it, and obey while you rebel."¹ *Tout le monde y passe*, the argument seems to be; science in especial is founded on assumptions; why not also metaphysics? "You are placed in a world of confusion," Professor Royce says, pressing this same point against the moralist who hesitates to say that he believes what he finds pleasant to believe; "and you assert that in its ultimate and eternal nature it answers to your moral needs. That seems presumptuous. You did not make that world. How

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 153.

do you know whether it cares for your moral ideals? Very well, then, be impartial. You are placed in a world of confusion, and you assert that it answers to your intellectual needs, namely that it is a world of order, whose facts could be reduced to some rational and intelligible unity. What business have you to do that? In both cases you transcend experience. Nature gives you in experience partial evil that you cannot in all cases perceive to be universal good. Nature also gives you in experience partial chaos that you cannot in all cases perceive to be universal order. But unwaveringly you insist that nature is orderly, that the chaos is an illusion; and still you do not feel ready to insist,"—on the principle, apparently, that one might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb,—"that the partial evil is universal good."¹ Nay, it seems that in matters of science we not only in the past have done in secret and inadvertently this wicked thing, but are in some sort in reason bound—perhaps by way of penance—unwaveringly to continue doing it, in open shame. Science, we are told, is founded on assumptions; and by these same theorists we are perpetually warned, (the warning is set down always with an accent of finality), that to distrust assumptions is to call in question the certainty of science.

There is an alternative, however, alike in

¹ *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, pp. 294-295.

science and in ethics and in metaphysics, to setting out from an assumption. There are such things as intuitions, as immediate knowledge, as "the Specious Present"—we may set out (if set out we can) from them. And if we cannot,—even if we find ourselves deprived of that point of departure,—there will always be the better part, the sceptic urges, of not setting out at all. Nay, even supposing us to be constrained by some malign impulse to frame an orderly system of the world in the absence of the indispensable materials—even supposing us to be coerced into deluding our intelligence with postulates and fated to believe in our achievement of the miracle of creating something out of nothing, it still fails to appear that the postulates can be a matter of mere choice or liking—in especial if we take counsel with science. There is in logic a trenchant distinction between accepting principles that such knowledge as we possess in a manner points toward though it cannot from the nature of the case demonstrate beyond possibility of error, and accepting principles that such knowledge as we possess points quite away from, though it cannot from the nature of the case refute beyond possibility of error. The former is the practice of science. It affords no precedent for the latter. And even if it did, metaphysics could take no advantage of that precedent. For metaphysics is logically above science in authority, not below it

nor on a level with it, and is held to a stricter discipline. Metaphysics is the science, the criticism, of final premises: it is precisely because metaphysics is at hand, specifically charged with the duty of subjecting pre-suppositions to a merciless examination, that science can proceed from them so irresponsibly. The credentials of science are in metaphysics one of the matters in question; science is one of the prisoners in the dock—presumptively an "old offender;" it is the business of metaphysics on the bench to sit worthily in judgment on her and not appeal to her in its own behalf for a "character." Nay, so fastidious *ex officio* is metaphysics, so far from the relative complaisance even of science, to say nothing of caprice, so far from indulging a natural kindness for mere probabilities and possibilities, that actual inevitabilities of human thought can find small favour in its sight.

For science does not pretend to logical sufficiency, it accepts the human faculties; the basis of science in the last resort is not logical but psychological: that is the very point of divergence, the split, the rift, between science and metaphysics. Metaphysics must be logically sound, science need not. Metaphysics cannot say, "Men think this and that, it is the very nature of their faculties to assume this and that, therefore this and that shall be unquestioned because *de facto* unquestionable." All other branches of knowledge may do

thus; it is the distinction of metaphysics to do otherwise, to be more thorough, to be most thorough, to be logical or nothing, to demand not what is psychologically *de facto* but what is logically *de jure* unquestionable. "In order to think at all you must subject yourself to a standard," Mr. Bradley says in the passage quoted above,—“a standard which implies an absolute knowledge of reality; and while you doubt this, you accept it, and obey, while you rebel.” But to be forced to make an assumption is one thing, and to be logically justified in making it is another, and it is at justification in logic that metaphysics is bound to aim. The fact that one accepts a thing while one doubts it and obeys while one rebels, may be the best reason in the world for pushing doubt and rebellion to an extreme—even to the extreme of declining, in matter of pure speculation, seriously to think at all. To point out that one has presupposed a thing is not always conclusive even as an *argumentum ad hominem*; it is never conclusive as anything else; and the supposition that it is so is of interest mainly for all that it ignores. Mr. Bradley in his *Appearance and Reality* affords us a faultless example of the contradictions to which such arguments may lead. “To think,” he says, “is to judge, and to judge is to criticise, and to criticise is to use a criterion of reality. And surely to doubt this would be mere blindness or

confused self-deception. But, if so, it is clear that, in rejecting the inconsistent as appearance, we are applying a positive knowledge of the ultimate nature of things. Ultimate reality is such that it does not contradict itself: here is an absolute criterion. And it is proved absolute by the fact that, either in endeavouring to deny it, or even in attempting to doubt it, we tacitly assume its validity.”¹ We are forced, that is, to assume that reality is consistent. But we are forced also, Mr. Bradley holds, to accept experience as reality; and it is shown us (if his argument be accepted as correct) in a hundred and thirty-odd pages of trenchant dialectic that experience is self-contradictory. “What can be more irrational,” Mr. Bradley with subtle irony demands, “than to try to prove that a principle is doubtful, when the proof through every step rests on its unconditional truth?” There you have the logical method of presupposition in its complete vacuity. This has been assumed from first to last, so runs the argument; it cannot be given up; it must be true; for—it has proved its own impossibility.

It is by this same method of demonstration that the adversaries of scepticism have from time immemorial stood ready to confute the sceptic. “You try to show,” they say to him, “that the human intellect is incapable of knowledge, and

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 136.

employ the human intellect in the endeavour; but to employ it is to presuppose its competency; and it is irrational to call in question what you have presupposed. If the human intellect is incapable of knowledge your endeavour cannot by its own terms succeed, and if your endeavour has succeeded the human intellect is not incapable of knowledge." There is the "little dilemma" presented to the sceptic: scepticism stultifies itself, it has been said, in three words. The fewer the better, the sceptic may however answer—or perhaps the worse. The notion that scepticism is in so obvious a sense an impossibility, is a bad joke: what the dilemma in question really proves when urged against the sceptic is on the part of him who urges it a certain failure to comprehend. There is a distinction to be marked between electing either horn of that dilemma, and declining to elect at all: it seems always to be taken for granted that the sceptic is obliged to elect—to *maintain* his negative;¹ but the sceptic properly so called will do nothing of the kind—he would on the instant cease to be a sceptic if he did. The sceptic is not unacquainted with the nature of hypothetical conclusions. The sceptic—need the sceptic be at pains to say it?—does not maintain that we know nothing: he no more gives in his assent to the negative than to the

¹ e. g. see Lotze, *Logik*, sec. 302: But cf. sec. 310.

positive proposition in regard to knowledge: he stands perplexed. It is his adversary only who is obliged to elect, who does elect, and is by that act within the terms of the sceptical dilemma. Mr. Bradley seems to think that it in some way affects the logic of the case, if one is, or is not, *willing* to accept the result. "It would of course not be irrational to take one's stand on this criterion" (of consistency), "to use it to produce a conclusion hostile to itself, and to urge that therefore our whole knowledge is self-destructive, since it essentially drives us to what we cannot accept. But this is not the result which our supposed objector has in view, or would welcome. . . . And he is not prepared to give up his own psychological knowledge, which knowledge plainly is ruined if the criterion is *not* absolute."¹ Mr. Bradley, that is to say, deals frankly in *argumentum ad hominem*—in *argumentum ad hominem*, on this occasion, bad of its own bad kind, ignoring as it does the difference in the rôles of science and of metaphysics. That there is no opening for *argumentum ad hominem* in the case, needs hardly to be said; if one's knowledge really is in logic bankrupt, it will not become in logic sound because one shuts one's eyes. Least of all—Mr. Bradley, one is glad to note, himself implies it—can any *argumentum ad*

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 137.

hominem be addressed in the circumstances to the sceptic. It is not the sceptic that has contradicted himself; it is not the sceptic that has committed suicide (he is often dismissed as if he had!); it is intelligence that has contradicted itself; it is intelligence that has committed suicide that the sceptic may be born. It is not the sceptic that proposes to trust the witness that has lied; it is the friend and lover of "knowledge" who avers that the witness is as good as ever if you will but quite steadily ignore the fact that he has been caught.

3.

Mr. Bradley's doctrine and Professor Royce's amount to the assertion that from the point of view of the intelligence there is no difference in trustworthiness, or untrustworthiness, between postulates; that the field lies clear for those philosophers who claim the right to choose their postulates at will. The distinction between assumptions which all the evidence in our possession points toward and assumptions which all the evidence in our possession points away from, those philosophers may urge, would be a telling one, if only it were exemplified by the case before us, but it is not: the postulates of science are not postulates toward which the evidence in our possession points. It cannot for an instant be pre-

tended, in the matter, for example, of causation, that the so-called "external" world presents itself to the "individual" man as orderly. The particular instances in which the individual has the slightest reason to believe that he has at first hand known the cause of an effect, or the effect of a cause, are preposterously fewer than those in which, interpretation apart, he has known events at once uncausing and uncaused; and preposterously fewer they must always remain. The individual lives really and must always live, so far as mere "observation" is concerned, in an utter chaos; and the very questionable "fact," that in every instance in which he or one of his fellows has subjected an event to "adequate" examination that event has been found to be both causing and caused, possesses, on the present hypothesis, no significance whatever. In the first place, the adjective "adequate" obviously begs the question at issue: no examination would pass for "adequate" that failed to disclose the prefigured order. And in the second place, except on the absolute assumption of the very supposition the examination is intended to support, a particular instance is a particular instance simply, and the whole very inconsiderable number of instances "adequately" examined cannot be regarded as more than counterbalancing an equal number of the numberless host of the "inadequately" examined. An induction by simple enumeration

can never establish a general principle; and when it purports to do so by an examination not of all, nor even of the majority, but simply of a minimum of the particular instances concerned, it borrows all its seeming force from some unavowed, unavowable, major premise—from the uniformity, in the case in question, of the course of nature. The law of causation, and the principles of science generally, are so far from being supported by all the evidence at our disposal, (all the evidence that is to say *a posteriori*), that something very like the precise opposite is true. The postulates of science outface a greater portion of what for want of a fitter designation we must call the “facts,”—they subject the “facts” to greater violence,—than any postulate whatever of ethics or æsthetics.

And as for metaphysics, so these philosophers may press their point—the notion that it has among its special functions that of justifying in all the strict punctilio of logic the ways of science to man, might legitimately have been brought forward only if metaphysics had been competent to achieve its utmost aim. But it is competent to nothing of the kind, and the effort to hold it to its beautiful unattainable ideal serves no other purpose than to divert attention from a quibble. The only attempt deserving serious consideration ever made by metaphysics to supply the foundations of knowledge with a stable base, is the attempt—the futile attempt—

begun by Kant. The essentials of the Kantian contention are, that we do possess universal synthetic judgments of objective validity; that these cannot be derived from experience; that therefore (there is no alternative) the understanding must impose laws of its own on the “objective” world—must supply, nay manifestly upon analysis does supply, the conditions which alone make experience, and in especial experience in the “pregnant” sense, possible. That fabulous monster, the understanding, *is* then somewhat, that it can impose laws? It has ceased inaccessible to *bombinare* in its native void? No museum of metaphysical entities should be without one! Granted that we do possess universal synthetic judgments *a priori*, and that they are “objectively” valid: the universality lies in the judgments,¹ and it should, if it is to lend any honest comfort to the sciences, lie in the “objective” validity. Granted that every event we cognize, or at least cognize “satisfactorily,” we cognize, for example, as causing caused; and we do not and cannot cognize every event: granted that every event we examine, or at least examine “adequately,” we find to have been causing and caused; we do not and cannot examine, far less examine “adequately,” every event. There is an uneliminated ineliminable empirical element in the orthodox Kantian argument. It is vain to show that under such and such conditions alone

¹ Cf. Sigwart, *Logik*, sec. 3-2.

experience, or experience in the "pregnant" sense, is possible, unless it can be shown also that experience in that sense (whatever sense is chosen) is real; and that experience, in whatever sense is chosen, is real, can be shown only empirically, and shown empirically with any certainty only of the present, and, in the case of experience in the "pregnant" sense, of but a portion—the portion satisfactorily cognized, adequately examined—of that. That experience in the pregnant or in any other sense existed in the past, we are warranted in believing only on the tarnished word of memory, and even that discredited witness bears testimony to the existence in the past not of a world in which the reign of cause and effect was known to be universal, but of a world in which, for every event known as caused, there were a thousand not so known that to all appearance were nothing of the kind; and as for the future, the less said of certainty about that the better. The miserable induction in question proves, if it proves anything, (which happily it does not), that in the world in which we live instances of cause and effect exist sporadically for the further confusion of an otherwise uniformly chaotic chaos, and that our vision of an orderly universe is simply an obstinate illusion. The reign of cause and effect *may* indeed be universal, but then again it may not; the universality of our synthetic *a priori* judgment in the matter may indeed possess "objective

validity," but at least it has not been proved to possess it. Even the "objectively" insignificant sense of subjective necessity itself, with which the judgment is credited, may be as vapid and deceptive as our naive sense of the freedom of the will. "It is evident," says Lotze, "that in the case of truths which are to be recognized immediately as universally valid, the sole credentials must be the clearness and strength with which they force themselves upon consciousness and at once claim recognition without constraining it by any process of proof; and any man is perfectly at liberty to allow this claim or to resist it; it is open to every one in all honesty to distrust the self-evidence with which this or that object of knowledge presents itself to his consciousness." True, Lotze is at pains to hint that such distrust is sophistical, and adds, in dismissal of the possible sceptic in the case, that "by resorting to such sophistry as that one may contest the validity of any process of proof whatever and of one's own contention together with the rest."¹ But the untenability of the positions thus left open for the sceptic to assail is not diminished by the uncertainty of his success. If his success were assured, that position would be indubitably untenable; if his failure were assured, that position would be tenable or not as other considerations might affect it; but with his success uncertain, the tena-

¹ *Logik*, sec. 356.

bility of that position is uncertain; and for him *qua* sceptic uncertainty is success, and for those who assert its tenability uncertainty is sheer surrender. At whose door the charge of sophistry justly lies, is plain.

Moreover, these philosophers may well continue, in the eyes of a discriminating logic, statements about the "nature" of the "understanding," the "structure" of the "mind," are recognizable as simple unedifying generalizations of the uniform fact masquerading as a reason for itself, as a condition precedent of its own existence. If it indeed be true that one always does conceive an event as causing and caused, when one takes the trouble to think of it at all; and if it be further true that one has a sense of subjective necessity in this conception—feels oneself, however unjustly or illusively, unable to conceive an event as uncausing and uncaused; it adds nothing to the logical stature, to the metaphysical dignity, of those two facts, to say that such is the "make" and "structure" of the "mind" that an event must be conceived in that way or not at all. Nay, more: even if this metaphysical monster, this ancestral *ens rationis* paradoxically begotten on its own offspring, does at present make it impossible to conceive an event except as causing and caused, there is no ground to believe that it has done so in the past excepting such as is supplied and for purposes of logical certainty

vitiated by the memory; and no ground whatsoever to believe that it will continue to do so in the future; and with its past insecure and its future unsecured, it is ridiculous to pretend in the interests of science to make much of the "structure" of the mind. Nor can it be urged, as Fichte might have urged, that the "structure" of the mind, the "nature" of the understanding, is transcendental, and as such not subject to change, which is phenomenal; for in the first place "transcendental" is one of those abstract terms which are *des ombres qui cachent des vides*; and in the second place, no change has been attributed to the structure of the mind itself, but only to its determinations, in the exercise of its inscrutable freedom, in time and space. "The universal presuppositions which form the outline of an ideal of science are not so much laws which the understanding prescribes to nature, or rather to our sense-perceptions, as laws which the understanding lays down for its own regulation in its investigation and consideration of nature. They are *a priori* because no experience is sufficient to reveal or confirm them in unconditional universality; but they are *a priori* not in the sense of self-evident truths, but only in the sense of presuppositions without which we should work with no hope of success and merely at random, and which therefore we must believe if we are in earnest in our endeavour after knowledge. They

are all postulates, and are akin to the ethical principles by which we are wont to determine and to guide our free conscious activities."¹

4.

Elaborate as are these arguments, the sceptic answers, they may be summarily disposed of. As against the thoroughgoing rationalist of the Kantian type, they are perhaps not wholly without effectiveness; the thoroughgoing rationalist of the Kantian type perhaps does somewhat blindly ignore these difficulties; but he is at least not guilty of ignoring difficulties still more fundamental and of bidding for our approbation on the score precisely of having cut the knot he has not had the deftness to untie. There can be no case made out for the permissibility in metaphysics of choosing postulates at will. If it has been the fault of metaphysics in the past to leave the will too much out of account, it is too often the fault of metaphysics in the present that it takes account of nothing else. The specific demand of the intelligence, it cannot be too often said, is for matter of fact, and for sheer logic; an offer to maintain the ultimate presuppositions of knowledge by sheer pluck—by courage—is on a par in its significance for metaphysics with an offer to

¹ Sigwart, *Logik*, sec. 62, 4.

maintain them by pistols. Nay, by this very energy of will these ultimate presuppositions stand condemned. In ethics indeed, which is concerned with conduct, the introduction of fixed-bayonets at a certain stage of the discussion is not without its profound significance; in metaphysics it is merely a confession of defeat. The distinction between assumptions which the evidence at our disposal points toward, and assumptions which the evidence at our disposal points away from, is as pertinent as could be wished, and can in the case in question be neither disproved nor successfully yet ignored, but at the utmost minimized. The evidence at the base of the principles of science may be shown to be very possibly psychological only, doubtfully logical; but it cannot be shown to be unquestionably illogical, or rather non-existent. "It is self-evident," said Lotze, "that in the case of truths which are to be recognized as immediately and universally valid, the sole credentials must be the clearness and strength with which they force themselves upon consciousness;" such truths impose themselves, that is to say, upon the understanding; and the distinction between what imposes itself upon the understanding and what does not is unmistakable. The mark of such truths is elsewhere by Lotze said to be the inconceivability of the opposite—the inability of the will to rid the understanding of them even for a moment; and

indeed the test of what assumptions find favour with the intellect is to be sought for—but by contraries—in the power of the will. The distinction between assumptions of which the understanding cannot rid itself even with the aid of the will, and assumptions of which the understanding cannot get or keep possession except by the aid of the will, is in this connection fundamental: there are assumptions that we entertain because we will to entertain them, there are assumptions that we entertain without or even against our will. The attempt in the interest of certain cherished dogmas to ignore the difference, to regard these two antagonistic kinds of assumptions as in the same sense postulates, bears its character upon its face. It may well appeal to pistols in its support—it could not be expected to appeal to reason. And if metaphysics be indeed incompetent to supply what science demands, does it follow with faultless cogency that metaphysics may offer in its stead what science does not demand? It cannot supply logic, it will *therefore* give courage; it cannot tell a story, it will sing a comic song. A stubborn preconception of what the ultimate deliverances of metaphysics must be—an unbending determination that they shall satisfy that fictitious aggregate, our “whole nature”—betrays its adherents to strange issues. The scepticism that consists in distrust of reason where reason has discredited itself, is at once less

shallow and less unfathomable than the scepticism that consists in disregard of reason in the interests of a *parti pris*. “Thinking up to” a foregone conclusion is not necessarily intellectual insincerity, but it is quite as contemptuous of the best interests of reason as if it were, and is destined to be punished (logic laughs last here below!), as contempt of reason ultimately always is. There are people who care for processes and people who care only for results: it is the wisdom of the centuries that to those who care for processes, results shall be added, and that from those who care for results only shall be taken even that which they have. The sceptic cares for processes, not for results: the sceptic distinguishes between postulates, though he distrusts all postulates; the sceptic takes for sole safe starting-point or standing-ground the Specious Present.

CHAPTER II.

THE SPECIOUS PRESENT

I.

The Specious Present then, cry the adversaries of the sceptic;—so small a kitten in the abyss of this star-spangled universal bag! And really, they urge, if he trust his scepticism to the end, still less—neither kitten nor bottomless bag. For the paradox of the Specious Present is that it belongs wholly to the future and the past. The only present element which it contains is the mathematical line of cleavage between the no-longer and the not-yet; the point of contact between an infinite non-existent *ante* and an infinite non-existent *post*—a non-entity between two nothings. The instant one touches the Specious Present it vanishes like a soap-bubble; it is a whole made up of negative parts, the summation of a row of ciphers, an illusion, a mirage, a cheat. And even if it were not, one never knows a mental state as present except by means of a subsequent mental state, and by that time the first is

present no longer—if it ever was present; by the time one says to one's self, "I am conscious at present of *A*," what one is really conscious of is a consciousness (and a fallacious one) that one is at present conscious of *A*. Not only so, but one can know a thing at all only as distinguished from something else; one can know the present only as distinguished from the future and the past; if one can know the present only, one cannot know the present at all. And the present that one imagines one knows is so inextricably overlaid and interwoven with elements not present—so wholly derives its significance and even its very complexion and character from elements not present, that but for them it would be something totally different from what it is: if one takes it in isolation, one falsifies it; if one does not falsify it, one accepts along with it much more than itself. And one could not take it in isolation if one would; and even if one could, time would still be needed to analyse it out, and when at last one got it, it would not be present. And all this is to be ignored, we are assured, after the manner of presumptuous empiricism, in the name of logic and ultra-scrupulosity! As if immediate knowledge also did not afford its special mystery! Examine any bit of immediate knowledge and it resolves itself into relations, and relations, and ever fresh relations, to the end of the search. But relations without terms related are an absurdity. Or if it be in-

sisted in the face of the facts that the terms related *must* be discoverable, the relations are at least prior in time—it is only through a knowledge of their relations that the terms are brought to consciousness, are brought, that is, into existence; but the terms of a relation are prior in logic to the relation itself; it is an absurdity for the relation to exist before the terms related. It is surely one of the bad commonplaces of philosophy that intuition is impeccable. It is so by conclusive presumption of metaphysics,—the king can do no wrong. If the universal validity of the law of causation and of the axioms of mathematics is to be regarded as doubtful, it can hardly be too much to say (mistakes and errors in introspection being notorious) that the invalidity of particular instances of intuition is certain.

The plain fact, so say the adversaries of the sceptic, is that the present moment inevitably implies much beyond itself—inevitably is obliged to transcend itself. My present belief, for example, in the future is either true or false—there is no third possibility. If my present belief in the future is true, then my present thought resembles the future; and resemblance is a relation; and the *esse* of a relation, as also of the related terms, is *percipi*; and percipience implies a perceiving mind. If my present belief in the future is false, then my present thought fails to resemble the future; but unlikeness also is a relation, and the implication is

the same. Whether my present belief in the future is true or false, it demonstrates by necessary implication the existence of a mind other than my own, that is at this present instant in possession of my thought, and of the future (the object of my thought), and of the relation of likeness or difference between the two. "The essence of the related terms is carried beyond their proper selves by means of their relations," as is said by Mr. Bradley¹; or, as Professor Royce argues, since error is actual, the conditions which alone can make error possible must exist. "Either there is no such thing as error, which statement is a flat self-contradiction, or else there is an infinite unity of conscious thought to which is present all possible truth. For suppose that there is error. Then there must be an infinite mass of errors possible. If error is possible at all, then as many errors are possible as you please, since, to every truth, an indefinite mass of error may be opposed. Nor is this mere possibility enough. An error is possible for us when we are able to make a false judgment. But in order that the judgment should be false when made, it must have been false before it was made. An error is possible only when the judgment in which the error is to be expressed always was false. Error if possible then is eternally actual. Each error as possible implies a judgment whose intended

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 142.

object is beyond itself and is also the object of the corresponding true judgment . . . so that every error implies a thought that includes it and the corresponding truth in the unity of one thought with the object of both of them."¹

2.

The answer to all this which first rises to the lips of the defender of the Specious Present, is simply that its whole apparent force depends on our knowing beforehand which side of the argument the speaker wishes to support. In itself it is as ambiguous as an oracle; apart from its setting, a reflective listener might mistake it for a plea in favour of the very doctrine which it is urged to controvert. If (he might infer) the Specious Present is not very simply accepted in its presented length and breadth, if one yields to the temptation to cavil unseasonably for the sole reason that cavilling is not impossible, one commits one's self to the conception of the present as a mathematical line of cleavage between the no-longer and the not-yet; but the no-longer is non-existent, and the not-yet is non-existent, and a mathematical line of cleavage between two nothings is simply not a line of cleavage, is a companion nothing to the two non-entities it is rapidly affirmed to bound; and to conceive the present

¹ *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, pp. 424-425.

as nothing, as non-existent, is in the first place impossible; and would in the second place, if it were possible, be to make the content of one's conception deny the fact of one's conception—a dialectic achievement which would have the supreme distinction of refuting itself. If the atomic parts of time are not temporal, if they possess severally no duration, if they are mathematical points simply, then either time is something distinct and separate from its parts, and in that case they are not its parts, which is a contradiction; or time itself is not temporal (which looks very much like another contradiction), and in the general absence of duration one thing is as lasting as another, or rather nothing lasts at all, which is absurd. If one never knows a mental state as present except by means of a subsequent mental state, one never knows a mental state at all except as something which at the time it is not; but if such were really the case, we could by hypothesis never discover it, and we have, it seems, discovered it; and as the essence of a mental state is to be perceived, to perceive it as being what it is not is a contradiction in terms; and a mental state that is past is a mental state no longer, and to be unable to know it as present until it is past is to be unable to know it until it is non-existent and is as such beyond being known at all, which amounts to saying that no such thing as a mental state can exist, not even the one those very words record.

If one can know a thing at all only as distinguished from something else, then the present can be known only as distinguished from the future or the past or both; but to know two things as distinguished is to be acquainted with them both in the respects in which they are distinct; to know the present as distinguished from the future or the past necessitates one's knowing the future *qua* future and the past *qua* past, and that too at the instant when one is knowing the present *qua* present; but the past, if one has known it really at all, one has at least never known *qua* past but only *qua* present; and the future, if one ever really is to know it at all, one will never know *qua* future but only *qua* present; and one in any event does not know them respectively *qua* past and future at this present moment when alone such knowledge would avail, because at this present moment they are nothing and to know them would be not to know: so that one not only never can know the present *qua* present, never has known the past *qua* present, never will know the future *qua* present, but cannot even form the notions of a present, a past, and a future, to declare one's self unacquainted with: which miracle notwithstanding one may claim in company with the rest of human kind inadvertently to have performed. If the present is so overlaid and interwoven with elements not present that but for them it would be something different from what

it is, then either the elements by definition not present are present in fact, which is a contradiction; or else the elements by definition not-present are not present, and to be interwoven and overlaid with them is at present to be overlaid and interwoven not at all, and to be disguised by a negative overlaying and interweaving is not to be disguised; and the present is as frankly its unaltered self as the argument is transparently sophistical. If the only knowledge that is possible is knowledge of relations, and if knowledge of relation is impossible apart from a knowledge of related terms, then no knowledge is possible, not even this—the knowledge of the impossibility of knowledge, and agropingscepticism is to our crepuscular intelligence the meridian of truth. And if immediate knowledge is not impeccable, then consciousness presents itself as being what it is not; but consciousness is precisely nothing but what it presents itself as being, and to present itself as being what it is not, is not to present itself, and not to present itself is not to be, and negation among the qualities of its defects may vindicate a claim to impeccability, such as the present charge against immediate knowledge cannot emulate. Immediate knowledge and universal synthetic judgments *a priori* or *a posteriori* are separated by the bottomless gulf between what asserts itself and nothing more, and what asserts itself and infinitely more; between what presents itself for what it is, and what

presents itself as a guarantee for something that it is not; between intellectual minted gold and simple unsecured promises at some future date to pay. If the *esse* of a relation is *percipi*, and if my present belief in the future really does necessarily imply a relation between itself and the future, then there must be a mind that knows at once the relation and both the related terms; but one of the related terms is not yet in existence, and therefore the relation is not yet in existence; and when that term shall come to be in existence, then the term at present in existence will exist no longer, and therefore the relation will not exist; or if the future is in existence it is present, and that is to say it is not future, which is a self-contradiction. And even if none of this were true, the mind in question must be either my present consciousness or some consciousness other than that; but it could not be my present consciousness, because my present consciousness does not contain the relation in question nor the second related term; and it could not be a consciousness other than my present consciousness, for if it were it must know my present consciousness either from without or from within; but to know it from without would mean that there was a relation between that consciousness and mine, for the support of which a third consciousness would have to be supposed; and for another consciousness, even if in the interests of confusion it be called "another

moment" or a "larger whole" of the "same" consciousness, to know my present consciousness from within is a contradiction in terms, for precisely and solely what constitutes it "another" is its being "ejective" to my present consciousness. Nor does it lessen the difficulty to "declare," as Professo Royce suggests, "time once for all present in all its moments to an universal all-inclusive thought,"¹—except indeed as it would lessen every difficulty whatsoever to abandon all notion of self-consistency: for, not to insist on the logical impossibility of the hypothetical universal all-inclusive thought's knowing any other consciousness than its own, (and the impossibility cannot be too often nor too stubbornly insisted on), if time in all its moments is eternally present to an universal all-inclusive thought, then either the content of each of the moments is in a state of continual fluctuation, or it is not. If it is, then, no matter how swift the change may be, if it is conscious at all, and that is to say if it is real, there will be an appreciable period during which the earlier or the later determinations of the fluctuating content are non-existent, an appreciable period, that is to say, during which the universal all-inclusive thought is not universal nor all-inclusive; so that, under penalty of self-contradiction, no part of the content of any moment whatsoever can be in a state of fluctuation. But this present, passing moment's pettifogging,

¹ *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, p. 423.

teasing, hair-splitting consciousness that constitutes my present questioning me must be at least some part of some moment of a thought really universal and all-inclusive, and even within its narrow limits this present consciousness feels itself to be and therefore is unstable—fluctuating—as a swirling pool. If the universal all-inclusive thought knows this moment in frozen immobility, it knows it as it is not; if the universal all-inclusive thought does not include this moment's evanescence, it is not truly universal nor all-inclusive; if the universal all-inclusive thought does include its evanescence, it is not truly universal nor all-inclusive; in either case the difficulty which Professor Royce hoped to avoid is simply shifted from the form to the content of the successive moments of time. Or, to put the same difficulty in another way: if to be possible a thing must have been eternally real, to be at all a thing must always have been; but if so, my present consciousness *qua* present must have existed in the past, and that is either to say that it must have existed *qua* present before it was present, which is a contradiction in terms, or to ignore all distinctions of time whatever, and among them the very ones the speaker in this instance is immediately acquainted with. If error, as Professor Royce, following the best tradition of contemporary philosophy, defines it, is really possible only on the hypothesis above stated, it would seem necessary to hold

that error is not in that sense possible at all, and to reform one's definition.

3.

"In effect," the assailants of the Specious Present answer, "an antinomy—on your side and on ours antinomies." And antinomies, in the taste of the passing hour, are so high in favour—a philosophy unprovided with them looks so undeniably of an outworn mode,—that the defender of the Specious Present might well for fashion's sake accept with satisfaction that version of affairs. Nor, considering the mere imitations that the Kants and Hegels, the reigning princes in philosophy, consent sometimes to put forth as genuine, can it be fairly urged that men's conscience in such matters is exorbitantly strict. But the alleged antinomies here in question are not even imitations. One set of the contrasted propositions is perfectly plain in its undimmed self-evidence; the other is penumbral, vague—attracts the eye like some flitting shadow, only that its insubstantiality may be placed beyond dispute. The Specious Present burns before one in its flushed, intense, aggressive, palpitating actuality; and dialectic subtleties demonstrating its nothingness, its dependence, its eternal apologetic reference, droop in its fierce flame like night-flies about some flaring torch. To find an objection urged

against a position that is manifestly safe against attack, and to point out that the objection is self-defeating, is not to demonstrate an antinomy; it is in so far to remove the possibility of demonstrating one: and in this case the secret of the seeming force of the objection is easily discerned. To say that the Specious Present belongs wholly to the future and the past, is a vivaciously misleading way of stating that within the ample bulk of the Specious Present distinctions in duration may be made, and that the knife-edge of every such distinction cleaves the Specious Present into an after and a before; but they are an after and a before only *secundum quid*, in reference to it—to the distinction in question, an infinitesimal portion of the present consciousness; the fallacy consists in tacitly assuming them to be an after and a before *secundum aliud*, in reference to the present consciousness itself—to the whole, that is, of which they and the distinction are the parts. In the present consciousness indeed, (the appeal is always to immediate knowledge), there present themselves a number of streams of time with varying rhythms and atomic parts of different lengths, the length of a given rhythm or atom being both absolute—its “felt” length,—and relative, as estimated in the terms of the rhythm and atoms of a different stream. To say that one never knows a mental state as present, except by means of a subsequent mental state, is a somewhat

less vivacious and more misleading way of referring to the fact that within the ample bulk of the Specious Present distinctions in duration are not the only ones that may be made; abstractions, distinctions in aspect, in quality, are also possible; and each such distinction appearing temporally somewhere within the Specious Present, and being therefore cushioned between its outlying extremes, one may with accuracy say, when the distinction in question is that of the “presentness” of the present, that it is subsequent to the aspect it distinguishes—it is subsequent, that is, to an appreciable part of that aspect; but it is itself an appreciable part of that aspect, and is indisputably contemporaneous with itself; and to another appreciable part of the aspect, it is itself antecedent. It might with as much truth to fact be said, that one never knows a mental state as present, except by means of another present mental state, and so on *in infinitum*; or else by means of a preceding mental state, and so on retrogressively without end, as that one never knows a mental state as present except by means of a subsequent mental state. The only ground whatever for affirming that one can know a thing at all only as distinguished from something else, lies in the fact that if one know a thing at all one always may, and sooner or later almost always does, know it as distinguished from something else. The fallacy is an instance of a judgment true *secundum*

quid tacitly interpreted as true *simpliciter*. To say that the present is so inextricably overlaid and interwoven with elements not present—so wholly derives its significance, and even its very complexion and character from elements not present, that but for them it would be something totally different from what it is, is in the first place violently to abstract from the Specious Present everything but its scanty framework of sensations, and in the second place, to put a naïve trust in the memories, expectations, scientific theories of perception, and so forth, with which that framework is upholstered. But the validity of scientific theories, and of the pretensions of memories and expectations, is precisely one of the points at issue; and the Specious Present does not consist of sensations simply, but of the whole manifold shifting volume of consciousness present at the time, and among other things of certain distinguishable present states purporting, however hypocritically, to take cognizance of moments of consciousness antecedent to the Specious Present, or subsequent to the Specious Present. To say that one when examines any bit of immediate knowledge one finds that it resolves itself into relations, and relations, and ever fresh relations to the end of the search, is either by a quibble to define knowledge in such manner as to include “knowledge about” only, and to exclude “acquaintance with,” or else it is to interpret

the fact, that one can “assimilate” and discriminate unendingly, as importing—once more by a miracle of illogic—that one can never do anything else.

4.

As for the *esse* of relations being *percipi*, that notion, like so many others in the parterre of illusion, is a metaphysical blossom springing, it may reasonably be surmised, from our customary forms of speech. A relation, it is said, must exist *between* its terms, and if there is nothing *between* them—a gap, a void—for it to exist *in*! “If the things are not in relation,” Mr. Bradley argues, in regard to a plurality of reals, “they cannot be many; but if they are in relation they cease forthwith to be absolute. For on the one hand plurality has no meaning, unless the units are somehow taken together. If you abolish and remove all relations, there seems no sense left in which you can speak of plurality. But on the other hand, relations destroy the reals’ self-dependence. For it is impossible to treat relations as adjectives, falling simply inside the many beings. And it is impossible to take them as falling outside in a sort of unreal void, which makes no difference to anything.”¹ And again: “the relation is not the adjective of one term, for if so it does not relate.

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 141.

Nor for the same reason is it the adjective of each term taken apart, for then again there is no relation between them. Nor is the relation their common property, for then what keeps them apart? They are not two terms at all because not separate."¹ But suppose a universe, or if you insist, a multiverse, consisting in the first instance of an "all-inclusive" consciousness that *per impossibile* knows two others that are "ejective" to each other, and are and remain unaware of each other and of it; and suppose that these three (?) consciousnesses round off the sum total of actuality. Then the two subordinate consciousnesses are distinct from one another, are two, are alike, are different in many ways, all known to the "all-inclusive" consciousness. But suppose the "all-inclusive" consciousness presently to be withdrawn—suppose it annihilated, simply, its non-existence being so much less paradoxical than its existence. Then either the consciousnesses that it supervised are changed, are affected, by its disappearance, or they are not. If you say they are, you may fairly be challenged to produce your reason for believing so: obstinate preconceptions, *petitiones principii*, excepted, it is difficult to conceive what that reason could be. If you say with Mr. Bradley, that "if it" (a being—a reality—a consciousness) "is known by another, then forthwith it cannot be self-existent, since this relation

¹ *Ibid.* p. 32.

must clearly belong to its essence";¹ the reply is, that the brunt of the demand is too heavy to be broken by an adverb; that "clearly" ill does duty in this place for an argument; that the "clearness" in the case is more opaque than Stygian obscurity. What alone is clear, is the precise opposite: a consciousness exists if it knows itself; whether or not it is known by another consciousness is the least essential of accidents; happily so, if for it to be really "known," known "from within," by another consciousness is impossible. If you further say that the change in the case is manifest; that before the supervising consciousness was annihilated, the two subordinate consciousnesses were consciousnesses known each of them not only by itself but by another, and that to be known by one's self only is one thing, and to be known by one's self and by another is a different thing: then the reply is, that this saying is an application of the "psychologist's fallacy" to metaphysics; that it tacitly confuses a change in the thinker with a change in the thing thought about; that it gravely propounds the contradiction in terms that a change in one's consciousness can take place wholly beyond one's consciousness, in a consciousness other than one's own—that one's consciousness can change with no alteration in its content or its form. But if you elect the other alternative, and say that the annihilation of the

¹ *Ibid.* p. 143.

supervising consciousness leaves the subordinate consciousnesses unaffected; then, since the subordinate consciousnesses remain what they were—if they were distinct before, and two, and different, and alike, they are distinct still, and two, and different, and alike, though unknown *as* such either to themselves or to any other consciousness. To deny this is to affirm that a change may take place in a relation independently of any change in the related terms. The very simple fact is—is it not?—that A may see a blue bird, and B may see a blue bird, or A may see in one moment of consciousness both birds: in the former case, as in the latter, there are quite as genuinely relations of difference and similarity between the birds as seen; but in the former case these relations are not and cannot be known immediately, and may remain for all time unknown, because the related terms are in different consciousnesses; whereas in the latter case these relations both are and are unavoidably known immediately, because the related terms are in the ‘same’ consciousness, and precisely in what the unity of consciousness consists is this immediate knowledge of relations—the presentment in the ‘same’ consciousness of the relations along with the related terms. To say “*a* is blue—*b* is blue;” to say “*a* and *b* are both blue;” to say, “*a* and *b* are similar in being both blue;” are in short three ways of phrasing the same thing: if the

fact stated in the first of the three sentences is compatible with *a*’s existing in one mind and *b*’s existing in another, so is the fact stated in the third; if *a* and *b* do not severally become less blue when they exist one in one consciousness and one in another, they do not become less similar. “Plurality has no meaning,” Mr. Bradley remarks above, “unless the units are somehow taken together:” it would be quite as discriminating to affirm that plurality has no meaning unless the units are somehow taken apart. Two things are two, when they are both known to one consciousness, in that they are severally existent and are separate, distinct, in the sense of being distinguished; two things are two when they exist one in one consciousness, one in another, in that they are severally existent, and are separate, distinct, in the sense of being “split off”—each a unit in respect to other things with which they can directly be compared, and therefore units in respect to each other. And if it be objected that these two separatenesses are different, the point may be conceded: the difference is that between two units known as separate and two units separately known—between two units known as two, and two units defiantly, aggressively, repellently two, but not known, and it may be never destined to be known, as such. To be many, Mr. Bradley argues, is to be related, and to be related is to be dependent, and to be

dependent is to cease forthwith to be absolute. One is constrained to wonder whether Mr. Bradley has ever settled in his own mind what he means by the Absolute—whether he means the utterly independent or the virtually independent; that which has actually no relations or that which need have none; that which is actually not relative or that which is not necessarily so. The first is a mere knot of contradictions—the abstract and intense essence of impossibility; one cannot even declare it incomprehensible, or absurd, or divine, or absolute, without by that very act making it relative as an object of speech, or curiosity, or uncertainty, or what you will. If it is for the Absolute in that sense that Mr. Bradley is arguing, his reasoning defeats itself—the mere fact that he reasons at all about that Absolute refutes his conclusion. But if by the Absolute he means the essentially independent, the virtually unrelated, then his argument loses its power of impact, and is of no avail to batter down the outer wall of the Specious Present.

CHAPTER III.

SELF-TRANSCENDENCE.

I.

So far the defender of the Specious Present as the starting point of thought against the defenders of mere postulates; but the contention in the interest of the possibility of error is not so lightly to be counterpoised. Self-contradiction is after all so trivial a flaw in a theory that satisfies "our whole nature!" *La haute logique*—the "reason" as honourably distinct from the simple "understanding"—*n'a pas besoin d'arguments. Le coeur a ses raisons*; and provided always the conclusion speaks to the heart, logical suicide is but a more impatient, less pedantically formal, introduction into metaphysical immortality. The defender of the Specious Present may be indulged to the top of his analytical bent in the distinction affirmed between "acquaintance with" and "knowledge about"; both acquaintance with and knowledge about, it will be argued, are still knowledge, or the persuasion of knowledge. Knowledge or the persuasion of knowledge is either true or false;

there is no third possibility. And the only thing *in rerum natura* that can be true or false, (it is a commonplace incurrent logic), is a judgment, or a pro-the verbal incarnation, or embalment position as rather, of a judgment. An if so, then either there are parts of the Specious Present that are not known at all, or the whole of the Specious Present is known through judgments. But since to "feel" is in so far to be acquainted with, and to be acquainted with is to know, to say that there are parts of the Specious Present that are not known at all, is to say that there are parts of the Specious Present that are not felt, that are not in consciousness, that do not in effect exist, which is a contradiction in terms; and to say that the whole of the Specious Present is known through judgments, is to say that no part of the Specious Present is known immediately, intuitively, presentatively—as Hamilton might have said. For imprecision, falsity, is the specific vice of something that stands for something else—of a representative, a copy; a thing cannot be unprecisely or falsely itself. And truth is the correlative of falsity—truth is the specific virtue of a representative or copy, as falsity is the specific vice. A judgment is by definition a mental affirmation or denial about an object of thought: if the affirmation or denial is true, the judgment agrees with its object; if the affirmation or denial is false, the judgment fails to agree with its object: in either case the

judgment must be one thing and its object another; the thought and the object of that thought cannot be one. But if we know the specious Present only through the mediation of something else, then to say that we know nothing but the Specious Present is to say that we know nothing, not even the Specious Present, nor even our ignorance of the Specious Present. And if our thought of the Specious Present is one thing, and the Specious Present itself as the object of that thought is another, and if we know immediately, presentatively, only the thought; then, either the object of that thought exists in another consciousness than the moment that knows the thought, or it does not exist at all. If it does not exist at all, then the judgments that "know" it can be neither true nor false; we can neither represent nor fail to represent with precision unqualified nothing; truth and error are alike impossible, even in this very assertion of their impossibility—which is a direct self-contradiction: if it does exist, we are as certain of the existence also of a mind other than the self of the moment as we are of the existence of the Specious Present.

Or if in violation of the accepted definition of the term "truth," it should be urged by the defender of the Specious Present, that the Specious Present may be not true but truth itself, and the thought of the Specious Present and the object of that thought one and the same, then the rejoinder is

that such can be the case only in so far as the thought of the Specious Present is true. But the thought of the Specious Present is often, in some respects at least, false; and generally there is no more unstable elusive object of thought in the world than the contents of one's own mind (as it is called) at any given moment: the whole history of psychology is one long bewildering illustration of the perplexity and untrustworthiness of introspection. And when the thought of the Specious Present *is* false, then indubitably the thought of the Specious Present must be one thing and in one moment of consciousness, and the Specious Present itself as the object of that thought must be another thing and in another moment of consciousness; for a thing cannot falsely "present" itself to consciousness, since it by definition precisely is and is only what it presents itself to consciousness as being; and if the false representation and the object falsely represented were both present in the same moment of consciousness, the disagreement between them could not, as it does, escape detection—in especial if a knowledge of relations be accepted as precisely what constitutes the unity of a moment of consciousness. Also, quite aside from judgments of acquaintance with or knowledge about the Specious Present itself, some part of every Specious Present consists in perceptions, in memories, in expectations—in judgments, that is, the objects of which cannot by any possibility be

conceived as lying within the compass of the same moment of consciousness as the judgments themselves. Those objects lie therefore either within the compass of some other moment or moments of consciousness, or not within the compass of consciousness at all. To say that they do not lie within the compass of consciousness at all, is to say that they do not exist, simply; but if so, then the judgments covering them—the perceptions, memories, expectations, in question—can be neither true nor false, which is once more sufficiently absurd. But to say that they do lie within the compass of some other moment or moments of consciousness, is to admit that the Specious Present necessarily implies other moments of consciousness beyond itself, and moments, too, in fundamental unity with itself. For to constitute a judgment true or false, it is not enough that it correctly or incorrectly represent merely *some* object—*any* object whatsoever; it is absolutely essential that it correctly or incorrectly represent the one specific object or set of objects to which alone it refers, or intends, or is intended, to refer. "Common sense will admit," Professor Royce says, "that, unless a man is thinking of the object of which I suppose him to be thinking, he makes no real error by merely failing to agree with the object that I have in mind. If the knights in the fable judge each other to be wrong, that is because each knight takes the other's shield to be identical with the

shield as he himself has it in his mind. In fact neither of them is in error, unless his assertion is false for the shield as he intended to make it his object."¹ And "everything intended," he argues further, "is something known. The object even of an erroneous judgment is something intended.

. . . The object even of an error is something known."² To intend correctly to represent a thing implies a choice and hence an identification—a knowledge—of the thing to be represented, and implies it in the same consciousness with the intention. And the judgment and its intention are in the Specious Present, and the object intended is not, and (unquestionably in the case of error, of memories and expectations,) cannot be, in the Specious Present. The Specious Present must, therefore, be an undivided element, simply, in a wider consciousness that includes the Specious Present and the objects of the thoughts in which in part the Specious Present consists.

2.

The argument looks formidable; and considering the extent and depth to which its premises are entrenched in current philosophical literature, the sceptical defender of the Specious Present may well find it to the full as formidable as it looks.

¹ *Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, p. 398.

² *Ibid.* pp. 398-399.

No small part of his embarrassment needs must lie in the difficulty of devising a form of words at once sufficiently unmeasured to convey his own sense of the unfathomable hollowness of every part of it, and sufficiently reserved to do anything at all approaching justice to the natural deference in such matters felt toward something very like a consensus of opinion at the present day in the inner circle, the select minority, that knows. The only grounds, Professor Royce says, for refusing to go with the inference to a universal all-inclusive consciousness are two—two by the sceptic alleged already; and these he characterizes as natural prejudices, "presuppositions," "postulates." The first of these natural prejudices is that when one mind knows another from within, the two minds cease to be one and another, cease *ipso facto* to be two. The second natural prejudice is that the later parts of time succeed the earlier parts of time. "To explain how one could be in error," Professor Royce says, "about his neighbour's thoughts, we suggested the case where John and Thomas should be present to a third thinker whose thought should include them both. We objected to this suggestion that thus the natural presupposition that John and Thomas are separate self-existent beings would be contradicted. But on this natural presupposition neither of these two subjects could become object to the other at all, and error would here be impossible. Suppose

then that we drop the natural presupposition, and say that John and Thomas are both actually present to and included in a third and higher thought. To explain the possibility of error about matters of fact seemed hard, because of the natural postulate that time is a pure succession of separate moments, as that the future is now as future non-existent, and so that judgments about the future lack real objects, capable of identification. Let us then drop this natural postulate, and declare time once for all present in all its moments to an universal all-inclusive thought."¹ But the naturalness of these two presuppositions or postulates, the sceptic answers, lies in the fact that their logical opposites are self-contradictory. To propose quietly dropping these two presuppositions or postulates is to propose openly assuming two propositions that are self-contradictory. If there are indeed but these two grounds for rejecting the argument from the possibility of error, there is simply one ground more than is necessary—there is one for use and one for superfluity: unless indeed we are to ask ourselves precisely how many self-contradictions are permissible, as a sort of concession to human infirmity, in a metaphysical demonstration; and even if so, providing the number determined upon is at all a moderate one, the extravagant theory in question may safely be affirmed to pass beyond it. To the defender of

¹*Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, pp. 224-423.

the Specious Present it can scarcely seem an overstatement to say, that from its first word to its last that theory is one laboured repeated *reductio ad absurdum* of its premises; the very device that it presents for solving the initial difficulty involves the initial difficulty in an aggravated form. If all knowledge consists in judgments, then either the judgments that know the Specious Present are themselves in turn known or they are not. But since to feel is in so far to be acquainted with and to be acquainted with is to know, to say that the judgments which know the Specious Present are not themselves in turn known, is to say that those judgments are not felt, are not in consciousness, do not in effect exist—which contradicts the assumption that we started with, and goes far toward implying that a knowledge, that a consciousness, that the existence therefore, of the Specious Present is impossible; and the actuality of the specious Present was the admitted fact which that assumption was invoked to explain. And to say that the judgments which know the Specious Present are themselves in turn known, is to say that no part of those judgments is known immediately, intuitively, presentatively; for imprecision, falsity, is the specific vice (so it is in this theory alleged) of something that stands for something else—a thing cannot be unprecisely or falsely itself; and truth is the correlative of falsity—is the specific virtue of a representative or copy, as falsity is the

specific vice; and a judgment is by definition a mental affirmation or denial about an object of thought; and if the affirmation or denial is true the judgment agrees with its object, and if the affirmation or denial is false the judgment fails to agree with its object; and in either case the judgment must be one thing and the object of that judgment another—a thought and the object of that thought cannot be one; and in the present instance the judgments which know the Specious Present are the object of the thought which in turn knows them. To say therefore that one knows nothing of the Specious Present except one's judgments concerning the Specious Present, is to say that one knows nothing of the Specious Present, not even one's judgments concerning it, nor even one's ignorance of those judgments. And if one's judgments concerning the Specious Present are one thing, and one's knowledge, one's thought, of those judgments is another; and if of these two things one knows immediately, presentatively, only the thought; then either the object of that thought exists in another consciousness than the moment that knows the thought, or it does not exist at all. If it does not exist at all, then the thought that knows it can be neither true nor false: one can neither represent nor fail to represent unqualified nothing: truth and error are alike impossible, even in this very assertion of their impossibility—which is a direct self-con-

tradiction; and if it does exist, one is as certain of the existence also of a mind other than one's self of this present instant as one is of the judgments that know the Specious Present, or even as one is of the Specious Present itself. Nor can the argument draw breath there—or anywhere: it is committed to the infinite lapse of an endless series. If the thought that knows the Specious Present must itself under penalty of non-existence become the object of a second thought, that second thought must under the same penalty become the object of a third, and that third of a fourth, and so on, with all the collateral logical implications as to the existence of mental epicycle upon epicycle, mind within mind, until inanity have gorged its fill. Nor is this all. The infinite series stretches out in both directions. If the argument holds at all, it not only follows that the judgment which knows the Specious Present can be known only by a second judgment, and that judgment by a third, and so on; it follows also that the consciousness in which the Specious Present is lodged—the consciousness to which the Specious Present was in the first instance relegated—can itself know the Specious Present only in a judgment, and that the Specious Present must therefore be lodged really in a second consciousness—must once more be relegated to a consciousness a step beyond. But that second consciousness can, like the first, be supposed to know the

Specious Present only in a judgment, and a third consciousness would be in like case with the second, and a fourth with the third, and so on. The greater self that contains the objects of thought of every present self, demands with equal reason a still bigger self to contain its objects of thought, and that third self demands a fourth still bigger; the Specious Present exists only at the end of an infinite series, and the infinite series in that direction has no end, and the Specious Present does not exist at all. Not only so: the difficulty breaks out afresh at each step in either direction in the infinite series, and compounds infinity upon infinity. Each unit in the infinite series exists at once as the thought of the unit below it, so to speak, and as the object of thought of the unit above it. But the fundamental assumption of the argument was that not to be known is not to exist: the object of thought therefore is dependent for existence on the thought—any given unit in the infinite series is a condition of the existence of the unit below. But also the thought is dependent for existence on the object of thought: any given unit in the infinite series is a condition of the existence of the unit above. Every unit therefore in the infinite series must either exist independently both of the unit below it and of the unit above it, or not exist at all. If it does not exist at all, then an infinite series of such units is not an infinite nor even a finite series,

but the plain unity of the Specious Present from which we set out. If it does exist independently of the unit below it and of the unit above it, then it must independently both of the unit below it and of the unit above it be known, and known by a judgment, and that judgment by another judgment, and so on in another infinite series, with every unit of which the initial difficulty reappears in its initial vigour.

Nor have we even yet reached the end. Nor in the absence of certain information as to the limits of what may be regarded as a just concession to human frailty, (justice to conceptions that appeal to our whole nature being scarcely to be discriminated from generosity), do we dare affront the dangers of stopping ignominiously too soon. Objects of thought are logically prior in time to the thoughts of which they are the objects. "An error," Professor Royce says in a passage already quoted, "is possible for us when we are able to make a false judgment. But in order that the judgment should be false when made, it must have been false before it was made. An error is possible only when the judgment in which the error is to be expressed always was false. Error, if possible, is then eternally actual." And what holds of error in this connection holds also of truth. But each unit in the infinite series that must be exhausted before the Specious Present can be known is the object of thought, and therefore

logically prior in time to the unit, so to speak, above it. Now,—not to take advantage of Professor Royce's *always* and *eternally*, which seem to be of questionable inevitability in the sentences in which they occur,—either the increments of time which separate the units in the series of thoughts and objects of thought are severally smaller than any assignable fraction, or they are not. Or again, either they decrease in a diminishing ratio as the series mounts, or they do not. If in either case the affirmative is true, then, since to exist a thing must first be known, each of the units in each of the infinite series depends for its existence on a unit that is logically subsequent to it by however infinitesimal a fraction of time, and that is to say its existence is impossible; and if in both cases the negative is true, then each of the units in each of the infinite series depends for its existence on a unit that is logically subsequent to it by an infinite time, and its existence is quite as impossible as before. And even if in the latter case its existence were not logically impossible, it would be practically so; for beginning at no matter what unit in the series it would take (a) an infinite future time to follow it in the ascending series—the series of thoughts, and (b) an infinite past time to follow it in the descending series—the series of objects of thought; so that beginning at no matter what unit we never shall know anything and never have known anything. Not only so. If judgment is by definition

mental affirmation or denial concerning something else, then either we have independent knowledge, other than that contained in the judgment itself, of the objects of judgment, or we have not. If we have, then all knowledge does not consist in judgment; if we have not, then either we never judge, or at least we never can be sure we judge—our persuasion that we are affirming and denying about something else may well be an illusion. But if we never judge, we can never be in error or the opposite; and if we never know with certainty whether we judge or not, then possibly we can never be in error or the opposite; in either case the argument from the possibility of error and the argument from the possibility of truth lose their compelling cogency. If truth is the specific virtue, and falsity the specific vice, of a representative, a copy, (should this seem a ratiocinative tautology—a repetition in synonymous phrase of an argument already given, the fault, the sceptic needs must feel, here as in other cases lies with the affirmative to which his arguments are but replies), then in any given instance either we know the original, or know of an original, or we do not. If we do, then the original and the copy are confessedly in the same consciousness, and that is an end of the matter; if we do not, then neither do we know whether the so called "copy" is a copy or not, and that is an end of the matter. If everything intended is something known to the consciousness that intends,

and if the object of every judgment, even of an erroneous judgment, is something intended, then the object of every judgment, even of an erroneous judgment, is something known to the consciousness that judges; but the object of an erroneous judgment cannot to the consciousness that judges be anything known—if it were so the erroneous judgment could not be made; therefore either some things are intended that are not known, or the objects of judgment are not intended. To say that the thought of the Specious Present is, in some respects at least, often false, is to say that one often knows the Specious Present as it is not; but the Specious Present precisely is, and is only, what it is known to be, and to know it as it is not, is not to know it, simply—is a contradiction in terms. When *per impossibile* the thought of the Specious Present *is* false, then either we know it to be false or we do not. If we do know it to be false, then the Specious Present as the object of the thought of the Specious Present is present to our consciousness; and if we do not know it to be false, we have no reason to infer a consciousness beyond it that knows both it and its failure to agree with its intended object. To affirm that the thought of the Specious Present is often false, is to affirm that one often knows in the same moment of consciousness the thought of the Specious Present, and the Specious Present itself as the object of that thought, and the dis-

agreement between the two; but the whole force of the contention that if the thought of the Specious Present is ever false then the Specious Present must be in one consciousness and the thought of the Specious Present in another, lies in the proposition that a false thought of the Specious Present and the Specious Present itself as the object of that thought never could be known in the same consciousness, since if so the falsity could never escape detection—in especial if knowledge of relations be accepted as precisely what constitutes the unity of a moment of consciousness. What slippery dialectic is all this, the sceptic well may cry, that, like a mediæval incantation to raise the fiend, is as potent backwards as forwards!

3.

The argument from the possibility of error is in effect an *argumentum ad hominem* addressed to the sceptic, and that too to the inept sceptic, the sceptic that does not know his business, the sceptic that does not doubt, the sceptic that denies and needs therefore by the terms of his own statement no answer whatever. And that too only on condition that the inept sceptic is doubly inept and accepts certain current definitions. If (so runs the argument) you *affirm* that error exists, and if you *admit* that error is a judgment which does

not agree with its intended object, then such and such are the deductions. That the argument should for an instant seem to amount to more than this, that it should seem to appeal not only to the inept sceptic but to the doubting sceptic, is due to an unconscious play on the word "possibility." The admission of the possibility of error may be in intention an admission of either of two things: (a) something less—anything less—on the thinker's part than absolute certainty—an inability on the thinker's part to demonstrate that he is *not* in error; (b) the existence in the universe of all the conditions *sine quibus non*, (if such conditions there be!), of error, excepting only such conditions as depend on the thinker himself. It is in the first of these senses that the doubting sceptic is ready to admit that error is possible—it is possible for anything he knows to the contrary; it is in the second sense that the doubting sceptic must admit it possible (fancy him doing so!) before he comes within effective range of the argument. And those who are not sceptics but inquirers of common caution simply, wishing before they make an admission to know what justifies their making it, are in this matter in the meanwhile the allies of the doubting sceptic.

And even if the doubting sceptic did admit in this second sense the possibility of error, and even were his allies so ill-advised as to follow his example, the argument from this possibility of

error would still be nothing more than *argumentum ad hominem*—almost of the same kind with the stock argument, almost the stock jest, against "phenomenism," that the word *phenomenon* implies a somewhat not phenomenal that appears. The word *phenomenon* is an inappropriate word, simply, for what is meant; the supposed admission of the possibility of error would contain a word not much less misleading; and it is to be recollected that men may commit themselves to a false statement in words without thereby committing themselves to a false judgment. There is a suggestion of litigiousness in taking the implications of language so seriously: it might be supposed that *la famosa discordia*, as Leopardi calls it, *tra i detti e i fatti* had not yet reached the ears of metaphysicians: when Cæsar, (or Abracadabra!), lost the battle of Timbuctoo in A.D. 1900—fancy the implications of that! Error must be shown to be really possible, and not merely confessedly possible, if any argument worthy of attention is to be based on it; and error can be shown to be really possible, as it happens, only by being shown to be actual. And that, too, actual in a certain narrowly defined sense. Even the inept sceptic, handicapped by his preliminary admission, is impregnable against the argument from the possibility of error, and impregnable against it even as mere *argumentum ad hominem*, until it has been shown that error in that very special sense—the failure of a judg-

ment to agree with its intended object—is possible ; and that is not soon shown. Certainly no direct appeal to introspection can demonstrate it. Our memories are present mental facts ; we cannot go behind them ; to the best of our knowledge there is nothing behind them to go to. Our expectations are present mental facts ; we cannot go in front of them ; to the best of our knowledge there is nothing in front of them to go to. And as for the Specious Present itself and its alleged failure to represent the actual present, all that can be said upon the topic of the many errors in introspection to which the history of psychology bears witness, amounts simply to this, that the Specious Present is fluctuating, palpitating, unstable, ununiform, so short a time the same that it is difficult to find words for what it presents itself as being before it presents itself as being something else and leaves us nothing but the content of a memory, if even that, to work upon ; and the futility of work on that we know. Nor can the argument from the possibility of error make up for its deficiencies by allying itself with the argument from the possibility of truth. Every judgment must be either true or false—if the maker of the axiom so insists ; you may define a judgment absolutely as you please—as a chimæra, as a minotaur, as a dryad, as a sylph, as a square circle, as a circular square, or as a mental affirmation or denial about something else ; but before

you can draw from that definition and its implications consequences other than hypothetical merely, you must show that something answering to your definition exists. "Judgment" is, of course, a word in common use, and the things which it denotes are well known ; but before "judgment," the word in common use, and "judgment" as above specially defined, can be taken as similar in anything but sound, it must be shown that the thing denoted by the former possesses the attributes connoted by the latter ; and the difficulty in making that showing is the difficulty already encountered in regard to error—the difficulty of going behind memory and in front of expectation and beyond intuition : whatever "behind," "in front of," and "beyond," may here mean, if they mean anything. Nor does the fact that memories and expectations—judgments generally, logicians say,—“purport” to refer to something beyond themselves possess the slightest metaphysical significance. It might seem that to purport to represent is distinctly either to represent or to fail to represent ; but there is a third possibility. “One can neither represent,” it has been said, “nor fail to represent, unqualified nothing ;” unqualified nothing is precisely what, in the total absence of information on that head, most nearly corresponds to the blankness of the mind on the subject of what lies behind memory and in front of expectation and beyond intuition ; the

dilemma is not a closed one until this third possibility has been excluded, and it cannot be excluded; the exclusion would involve in another form precisely the difficulty it was designed to do away with. Or if it be alleged, as it may not unreasonably be alleged, that the assertion of the impossibility of representing unqualified nothing is ridiculous simply,—that one may as fairly represent or fail to represent unqualified nothing as qualified something,—that if one believes that there there lies nothing behind memory, wherever that may be, and nothing does lie there, one's belief is true, and that if one believes that there lies something behind memory and nothing lies there one's belief is false: then the reply is that the assertion was necessary to the argument from the possibility of truth and error, that upon the abandonment of that assertion the dilemma, though closed, is harmless utterly, that among the qualities of its defects unqualified nothing may at least vindicate a claim to self-subsistence, that it at least does not demand the support of a knowing mind, or rather, (since to be known is to be something), that it expressly excludes the possibility of a knowing mind, and that therefore those judgments which purport to represent something beyond themselves may be as false as you will, without necessarily involving a consciousness that knows them and knows their objects and the relations between the two. The notion that a

mental state, merely by proclaiming itself a copy, can, if only it shout loud enough, somehow force the void to bring forth an original, possesses all the essentials of incredibility. Nor can any confirmation for the theory be deduced from the fact of recognition: recognition is simply a psychological phenomenon like another, and as such is not uncritically to be relied upon in metaphysics. It is a feeling, if you will, of having meant just *that*—a psychic "I told you so!" but the feeling that one meant just *that* is one thing and the fact of having meant just *that* is another, and the fact is no more absolutely to be inferred from the feeling in the case of the psychic than in the case of the verbal—"I told you so!" Illusions of memory and expectation are supposed to be not infrequent. Nor even if the fact that judgments purport to refer to something beyond themselves did possess a metaphysical significance, would that significance be quite what alone can be of service to the argument from the possibility of truth and error. "Common sense will admit," Professor Royce says, "that unless a man is thinking of the object of which I suppose him to be thinking, he makes no real error by merely failing to agree with the object that I have in mind." Common sense will admit also, it seems likely, that one's memory of words supposed to have been spoken yesterday is true or false, even though the words themselves are no longer in

existence ; and that one's expectation of hearing certain words spoken to-morrow is true or false, even though the words in question are not in existence yet. Even if a judgment can, by crying out very vehemently that it is a copy, mysteriously impregnate the void with an original, there is no reason to believe that it can force the void to bring forth that original before its time. "But in order that the judgment should be false when made," Professor Royce says, "it must have been false before it was made. An error is possible only when the judgment in which the error is to be expressed always was false. Error, if possible, is then eternally actual." To the sceptic and his allies it is difficult to conceive how this follows, unless indeed on the doctrine that the *esse* of relations is *percipi*, (it is a prodigious price to pay for so brief a proposition); and that doctrine has been found itself far too infirm to be relied upon. Though indeed, if that doctrine were in other respects quite sound, it might well give way beneath the burden of an infinite mass of error eternally actual; and it could not in any case support the whole of it. Before a judgment is made it does not exist; that it should be false or anything else before it exists, may well fill the cautious enquirer with bewilderment; and to add that it not only can be but must be so! If truth and falsity are relations, then, before the judgment exists, one at least of the related terms is wanting;

it does not appear that the relation can subsist in its absence, nor that the other related term must have been from all eternity sitting in wait, as who should say, with gloves and bonnet on. If before a thing can be possible it must eternally have been actual, then, since actuality excludes possibility, nothing ever can be possible—which contradicts the proposition it was invoked to explain.

4

Nor is a judgment, say the sceptic and his allies, really a mental affirmation or denial about something else. That the notion of its being so should have gained currency, was natural at a time when a judgment was all but universally supposed to consist in a proposition in words, and when the account given of such propositions by the scholastic logic was regarded as sufficient. A proposition in words *is* a mental affirmation or denial about something else; and he who insists on finding a psychological analogue for the proposition in words may with a certain readiness discover the object sought for. He who approaches logic from the point of view of psychology might be expected to find this task of identification more difficult. "It is one of the most valuable of the discoveries of recent years in matters logical and psychological," Dr. Heinrich Rickert says, "that wherever truth or falsity is in question something more than

a mere relation, or union, or connection, between ideas is involved—that over and above the ideas or the association of ideas there must be, to constitute a judgment, another element added, which can in no sense be regarded as ‘vorstellungsmäßiges’—as in any manner due to the ideas themselves or to the relation between them.”¹ And following Brentano² Dr. Rickert finds this distinctive element in a psychic *Bejahung oder Verneinung*—a mental affirmation or denial; and he argues that affirmation and denial belong essentially to the volitional aspect of the mind, and are controlled as such by a certain perception of values: we affirm or deny in obedience to a sense that in the given instance we ought to affirm or deny; so that not only in the sphere of morals, but also in the sphere of the intelligence, the category *Sollen* is more fundamental than the category *Sein*. And Mr. Bradley declares: “Judgment, in the strict sense, does not exist where there exists no knowledge (*sic!*) of truth and falsehood; and, since truth and falsehood depend on the relation of our ideas to reality, you cannot have judgment proper without ideas. And perhaps this much is obvious. But the point I am going on to is not obvious. Not only are we unable to judge before we use ideas, but, strictly speaking, we cannot judge till we use them as ideas. We

¹ *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, § 49.

² *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte*, § 266, *et seq.*

must have become aware that they are not realities, that they are *mere* ideas, signs of an existence other than themselves. Ideas are not ideas until they are symbols, and, before we use symbols, we cannot judge.”¹ And after rebuking those who live too exclusively, he feels, in the psychological attitude,—“We have as good,” he continues, “as forgotten the way in which logic uses ideas. We have not seen that in judgment no fact ever is first that which it *means*, or can mean what it is; and we have not learnt that, wherever we have truth or falsehood, it is the signification we use and not the existence. We never assert the fact in our heads, but something else which that fact stands for. And if an idea were treated as a psychical reality, if it were taken by itself as an actual phenomenon, then it would not represent either truth or falsehood. When we use it in judgment it must be referred away from itself. If it is not the idea of some existence, then, despite its own emphatic actuality, its content remains but ‘a mere idea.’”² The idea employed in judgment is, in effect, a universal; and, having spoken of it as such and referred with just surprise to those who might suppose him to be unaware of so obvious a fact as that every single idea is particular,—“When I talk of an idea which is the same amid change,” Mr. Bradley adds, “I do not speak

¹ *The Principles of Logic*, p. 2.

² *The Principles of Logic*, pp. 2-3.

of that psychical event which is in ceaseless flux, but of one portion of the content which the mind has fixed, and which is not in any sense an event in time. I am talking of the meaning, not the series of symbols; the gold, so to speak, not the fleeting series of transitory notes. The belief in universal ideas does not involve the conviction that abstractions exist, even as facts in my head. The mental event is unique and particular, but the meaning in its use is cut off from the existence, and from the rest of the fluctuating content. It loses its relation to the particular symbol; it stands as an adjective, to be referred to some subject, but indifferent in itself to every special subject."¹

But, as Brentano, following John Stuart Mill, has himself urged with much effect against the theory of belief presented by Bain: when one looks about the room, when one lets one's eyes travel out the window across the meadows to the line where the meadows meet the sky, when one lets one's mind travel out beyond the limits imposed on one's eyes, the details in one's more or less incomplete *Weltbild* which one regards as "real," as genuine, as true,—the details in brief in which one believes,—cannot be distinguished from the details in which one does not believe—the details which one regards as fanciful simply, as imaginary, as contributed by the mind itself,—by the mere fact that we are willing to act on the details of the former

¹ *Ibid.* p. 7.

class, to trust them, and are not willing to act on the details of the latter; because, as Brentano says, *Die besonderen Folgen würden nicht sein, wenn nicht ein besonderer Grund dafür in der Beschaffenheit des Denkens gegeben wäre.*¹ Or, as Mill puts it: "The theory as stated distinguishes two antecedents, by a difference not between themselves, but between their consequents. But when the consequents differ, the antecedents cannot be the same."² We should not be willing to act on the one set of details, and utterly averse to acting on the other, unless we perceived some difference between them—we should not be unwilling to dive into an imaginary pool of water, and willing to dive into a "real" pool, if we had not antecedently distinguished the imaginary from the real. And *Bejahung* and *Verneinung*, affirming and denying, are as active as diving or refusing to dive—are as plainly subsequent to a perception of some difference in the things respectively affirmed and denied as diving and refusing to dive are to a perception of some difference in the respectively "real" and imaginary pools. It is ridiculously false to introspection to suppose that before one takes one's matutinal plunge one affirms that such and such is water and is wet. One is perfectly ready to affirm it, no doubt, if it should be sincerely questioned; but in the absence of

¹ *Psychologie vom Empirischen Standpunkte*, § 268.

² J. S. Mill's edition of James Mill's *Analysis*, vol. 1, p. 403.

sincere question nothing at all approaching affirmation comes into one's head. Fancy one's not believing a thing until one has affirmed it!—by the very meaning of the phrase one affirms something already pre-existing: to affirm a belief is only one way among others of acting on that belief. Nor is this true only of verbal affirmation; mentally to affirm a belief as frankly presupposes a belief to be affirmed as verbally to affirm one does. Or do you mean by mental affirmation, what no doubt is most often meant, that tacit, smooth, unreflective, involuntary assent, or rather perception, that the pool is water and is wet? do you mean by mental denial that tacit, smooth, unreflective, unconscious and therefore non-existent refusal to believe that the pool is not water and not wet? Then affirmation and denial are nothing active, and do not belong to the volitional aspect of the mind, and are *not* as such performed in obedience to a sense that in the given instance we ought to affirm or deny, and the argument for the priority of *Sollen* to *Sein* is without foundation. Nor is this less true because of the distinction between reflective and unreflective belief—the distinction secured in Mr. Bradley's guarded statement by the word *strictly*, when he says: "Not only are we unable to judge before we use ideas, but, strictly speaking, we cannot judge till we use them *as* ideas." That distinction, elsewhere fundamentally significant, is in this connection

misplaced and frivolous. When one does not reflect, a certain vision of the pool, as water and as wet, tacitly, smoothly, without motion of one's will, takes shape in one's *Weltbild*—takes its place as a detail in one's wider vision for the moment of the world; and that is all. One believes it, one trusts it, one takes one plunge in utter confidence. When one reflects, a certain vision of the pool, as water and as wet, tacitly, smoothly, without motion of one's will, takes shape as a detail in one's wider vision for the moment of the world, precisely as in the first instance; and then, only then, one philosophically collects one's thoughts, one calls to mind the inferential elements in perception and the opportunities they afford for error, and—acquiesces in one's tacit, smooth, involuntary vision of the pool as before! Seriously, when one deliberates whether one's naïve belief, that the pool is water and is wet, is true, the utmost that one does is simply, in Mr. Bradley's phrase, to "offer" one's vision of the pool, instead of its wetness and wateriness, certain incompatible attributes—dryness, inkiness, glassiness, what you will; and that vision remains unaffected by our offer. But if that vision is a judgment after the offer is made, and has remained unaffectedly what it was, it was a judgment before. "Ah, but as the result of its having withstood the offered attributes, the mind affirms it!" On the contrary; the result of its having withstood the offered attributes

is, if anything, a lessened positiveness, a sense of insecurity—one takes one's plunge in diminished confidence. There is a touch of burlesque in calling this (if anything) enfeebled, hesitating, doubtful acquiescence distinctively an affirmation.

But, it may be explained by Mr. Bradley and those who agree with him, in saying the mind affirms there is no reference made to the degree of confidence which it reposes in what it affirms; the meaning is, that in the naïve belief it does not occur to one that one is not dealing immediately with the reality—the wateriness and wetness of the pool are inadvertently regarded as being immediately given; whereas in the reflective belief one knows that what one really has immediate possession of is an idea of wateriness and wetness, and the affirmation consists in asserting that those ideas correspond to something in the "real" world—that if one takes one's plunge one will discover the real wateriness and wetness which those ideas symbolize. This is what is meant by employing ideas *as* ideas, by regarding them as signs of an existence other than themselves, by referring them away from themselves; and it is not the ideas themselves that are predicated of reality, but their signification—it is an absurd account of one's judgment of the pool to say that it consists in one's idea of water and of wet; and the ideas are universals because a part only of their content is employed—the wetness of which

one has an idea may be the specific wetness of alcohol, and is in any event an indefinite, fluctuating, mental somewhat, as a whole very unlike what is believed of the "real" pool. What a darkening of counsel! Almost one feels as if one were being made the butt of some good-natured jest, some sly dialectic mystification. There is, it may be safely asserted, no proposition in the range of common-sense so plain that it may not be made absurd by interpreting half of it on the theory of crude realism and half on the theory of subjective idealism. What on the theory of crude realism are the wateriness and wetness of the pool one is contemplating, are on reflection found to be unknown to one except as ideas in one's head; but in like manner the "real" wateriness and wetness to be discovered by taking one's plunge are on reflection found to be unknown to one except as sensations in one's head; and as an ultimate suicidal flourish (if the landscape is ideal the head cannot be less so) one's head itself is on reflection found to be unknown to one except as sensations in one's head along with those sensations and ideas: the little fish has swallowed the big fish whole, and the ocean in which it floats, and justly to complete the miracle has swallowed at last itself, and occupies in the hollow void of its own interior the same face to face relation of externality to the big fish that it occupied before. It is, among others, this particular mystery of the

faith that has made so many men idealists ; it has done so to small account if the little fish is begin once more to open its engulfing jaws. One sees no limit to the number of supererogatory stomachs it may have in reserve. Objective idealists of a certain sort seem not to have seized the full import of the idealist argument ; one passage, in pursuance of a fallacious theory of perception, down the microcosmos' gorge has not sufficed for them ; they are preparing to affront the psychic irony of a second. " Sudden at this crisis, and in pity at distress," writes Mr. Bradley in one of his most poetic passages, " there leaves the heaven with rapid wing a goddess—Primitive Credulity.¹ Mr. Bradley has not concealed a marked aversion to this particular divinity, and there would therefore be discourtesy in saying that the account given by him, and by those with whom he in effect agrees, of the nature and function of ideas in judgment, was conceived under her inspiration ; but it might have been. As a common-sense criticism on the shortcomings of the scholastic logic Mr. Bradley's account might pass ; as a metaphysical or psychological finality it is too high-handed in its violence to facts ; scarcely can it be conceived that anybody should accept it who has ever looked steadily at what it means. When one analyses one's *Weltbild*, when one observes what parts of it are given and what parts

¹ *Principles of Logic*, p. 299.

" found," what parts are sensation and what idea, no sudden transformation—is there really need to say so ?—takes place in one's vision of the world ; neither the whole nor even the ideal portions of one's *Weltbild* advance upon one and take up their station behind one's face—inside one's skull ; one does not even for an instant deal with those ideal portions as maps or pictures or representatives ; one is as far from referring them away from themselves as one is from leaping out of one's skin. When one stares at the pool in one's crudely realist mood one recognizes that the pool is given as before one's face ; when in one's idealist mood one reflects that the reality of the pool is psychic one does not cease to recognise the pool as given before one's face. The realist landscape is no more aggressively external to the realist head than the idealist landscape is to the idealist head ; the realist head is a detail in the realist vision of the world ; the idealist head is a detail in the idealist vision of the world. When one stares at the pool in one's crudely realist mood, one has a sense of dealing in utter immediacy with the reality ; when one reflects that that reality is psychic, one's sense of dealing with it in utter immediacy justly remains unchanged. One sees the pool wet in the first instance as one sees it coloured, and when one analyses out the colours as given in sensation and the wet as given in idea—when one notices a specific difference, not, so to speak, of pattern only, but of mode of existence,

between the colour and the wet—one of three things (in the experience at least of some among us) happens; and none of them lends itself to Mr. Bradley's account. (1.) The percept remains unchanged except that its elements are distinguished—idea and sensation present themselves as such, as if in a sort of interpenetration and consubstantiality, like the "attributes" in a "natural kind." This is notably apt to be the case with spatial ideas. (2.) The percept itself remains unchanged as before, but the ideas send off ghostly doubles of themselves that hover undecidedly about the margin of the percept and tend, as the analytic attention wanes, once more to merge into it. If they desert the immediate outlines of the percept itself they take refuge not in the skull but in the periphery—in the particular sense organ to which they specially belong. (3.) The ideas dissipate—go off in spiritual vapour, become extinct, leave the sensations bare; and once more, as the analytic impulse wanes, tend rapidly to reform. This re-merger or re-formation of the ideas is apparently the nearest approach, in the process of reflective as distinguished from unreflective judgment, to anything analogous to "affirmation" or to the "reference of an idea away from itself;" and the indeterminateness of the ideas as compared with the delicate finish shown by the sensations is the sole excuse for regarding them as universals. But the affirmation in this case is, of course, not voluntary,

it is distinctively involuntary—the involuntary re-formation of a vision of the world that an act of volition has dissipated or disordered; and the ideas themselves and not their *meaning* (whatever *that* may be! Mr. Bradley elsewhere has done his best to tell us) are used, and used in all their particularity—their indeterminateness is at the utmost comparative only; it is "mythological" to say that the idea of wetness which one analyses out of one's percept of the pool before one may be of the specific wetness of alcohol; it is of the specific wetness of water, and in a number of distinctive respects always of none but *this* water. "When I talk of an idea," we have found Mr. Bradley saying, "which is the same amid change, I do not speak of that psychical event which is in ceaseless flux, but of one portion of the content which the mind has fixed, and which is not in any sense an event in time." And again, he says: "But an idea, if we use idea of the meaning, is neither given nor presented but is taken. It cannot as such exist. It cannot ever be an event, with a place in the series of time or space. It can be a fact no more inside our heads than it can outside them."¹ The statement is heroic, but it reads singularly like a euphemistic paraphrase for a confession of failure. Really when a doctrine in the hands of so accomplished an apologist as Mr. Bradley begins to perform such antics as that!

¹ *Principles of Logic*, p. 8.

When according to the legend the Goddess of Primitive Credulity once more shook her wings and abandoned the earth, she flew "to the stars, where" Mr. Bradley opines, "there are no philosophers."¹ Philosophers, no doubt, had overtaxed her powers. A "mind" "fixing" a "portion of the content" of a succession of similars that are not identical from moment to moment with one another nor with themselves; a portion of an event in time which is not itself "in any sense" an event in time; a somewhat psychic that cannot as such exist—may well have filled her with dismay. Either a "meaning" is a psychic somewhat or it is not; if it is not a psychic somewhat, it is nothing; if it is a psychic somewhat, it can never be twice the same (the principle is one that Mr. Bradley is practised in remembering on occasions awkward for his adversaries); it can at most be twice similar—similar as may be the particular ideas, a portion of the content of which, in any given case, it by definition is; and to speak of it as unchanging in the midst of the mind's perpetual flux, as identical at different times, is to permit one's self a laxity of speech that assuredly Mr. Bradley, least of all men, would allow to pass unchallenged in anybody else.²

When one considers attentively one's *Weltbild*, one finds, it may safely be declared, that the

¹ *Principles, of Logic* p. 299.

² *Cf. post*, pp. 114 *et seq.*

details one accepts as "real," the details in which one believes, are those simply that one has no consciousness of having one's self by sheer volition introduced. When one deliberately, purposely, by a mental effort, conceives the pool before one as of alcohol or of ink, one holds the resulting alteration in one's *Weltbild* to be fanciful or imaginary; one does not believe in it; one believes in the image which it has required force to dissipate, and which, the instant that force has been withdrawn, re-forms. The vision of the world that spontaneously takes shape in one's mind is one's "real" vision of the world—is one's vision of the "real" world; every detail that is *not* added and maintained by sheer volition, is believed in—constitutes in its unprocured connection with the remainder of one's vision of the world, a belief; every detail that *is* added and maintained by sheer volition, is unbelieved in—constitutes by the very fact of the procurement, the artificiality, of its connection with the remainder of one's vision of the world, a fancy, a product of the imagination. Mere togetherness in the mind of the ideas concerned cannot, Mr. Bradley says, constitute a belief—togetherness in the mind is found also in the products of the imagination;¹ and Mr. Bradley is no doubt in so far right; but the two togethernesses are not the same—one is spontaneous, the other is forced.

¹ So also Brentano, *op. cit.* S. 269-270.

When one wakes in the middle of the night, the vision of one's bed-room and of one's position in it that involuntarily, unreflectively, takes shape in one's mind, constitutes one's belief on the subject of where one is and how one is lying. When that vision is involuntarily displaced by another—by the vision perhaps of a less familiar room or of one's self lying with one's head toward an unaccustomed point of the compass—that second vision constitutes, as the first had constituted, one's belief on the subject of where one is and how one is lying. If the two begin to alternate, one is by that very fact in doubt: doubt *is* just that instability, that vacillation, in the composition of some detail in one's unforced vision of the world. If to set one's mind (as the saying is) at rest, one ultimately strikes a match, one of the alternative visions is forthwith established; the one that is not established is thereupon recognized as an illusion—and is still so recognised if, when the light has been extinguished, it reasserts itself, regains its ascendancy from time to time for a fraction of a second, as one is relapsing into abstraction, and disappears always as one reawakes: an illusion *is* just that—an unstable image that is apt to establish itself in one's *Weltbild* the instant one is off one's guard, but that gives place on reflection. One's unforced vision of the world stretches out not only in space but in time; the vision of the past and of the future that spontaneously takes

shape in one's mind is one's "real" vision of the past and future—is one's vision of the "real" past and "real" future; and among the facts of one's past (supposing always that one has had a past) are the things one has imagined one's self seeing and doing, and one of the elements in those imaginary scenes has been the feeling of volition, the sense of maintaining those scenes by voluntary effort. If in one's memory of such scenes that feeling of volition is represented, the scenes are remembered as imaginary—as having really been imagined; if that feeling of volition is omitted, has dropped out, the scenes are remembered simply as real—as having really happened. And as with one's own volition, so also with the volition of one's fellows—supposing always that one has fellows: (it is not the sceptic and his allies that have introduced a psychological discussion into metaphysics! but if questionable psychology is brought forward as of metaphysical import, it can hardly be beside the mark to contend that that psychology is questionable;) everything that one's fellows say they have conceived by sheer volition, or that apart from their saying, or in spite of their saying, takes shape in one's mind as having been by them conceived by sheer volition, presents itself in its place in one's own *Weltbild* as really imaginary, as having really been imagined by one's fellow-men. Everything that they say is steadily "borne in upon them," or that apart

from their saying, or in spite of their saying, takes shape in one's mind as being steadily borne in upon them, presents itself in its place in one's own *Weltbild* as really believed by them, as "real" to them, as "real" to one's self in that it is really one of one's fellow-men's beliefs; and, if it happens also to be steadily borne in upon one's self, as "real" to one's self in another sense,—in the sense of being also one of one's own beliefs. If one by sheer volition introduces some new detail into one's vision of the world—if, for example, one conceives one's self as richer or wiser than one is—and, so far as one's will is concerned, maintains that detail, the rest of one's *Weltbild*, independently of one's will, adjusts itself to the new detail; the detail forced into one's vision of the world is in the nature of an hypothesis—is an hypothesis—and the alterations in one's *Weltbild* that spontaneously take shape as the result of that details being maintained in one's vision of the world, are just so many hypothetical beliefs: such and such *would* be the case, *if* I possessed more wisdom or more gold. In so far as the process is voluntary, is a mental affirmation, it is imaginary; in so far as it is involuntary, is not mentally affirmed, it is a judgment. One may choose whether one will think or not, and what one will think about, as one may choose whether one will listen and look or not, and what one will listen to and look at; but one can no

more choose to think, in the sense of believing, what one will, than one can choose to see or to hear what one will.

CHAPTER IV.

INSUFFICIENT REASON.

NOR is truth specifically the virtue, nor is error specifically the vice, of a representative or copy; nor is logic at all concerned with truth in that sense. Let us begin, the sceptic says, with logic.

I.

However much at variance logicians may be in regard to other points, there are certain fundamental tenets on which, for the most part at least, they tacitly agree. Whether they announce their subject as the Organon of Discovery, or as the Grammar of Assent, they are at one in the belief that logic may be of service at some stage, under some conditions, in the ascertainment of truth by reasoning—of truth not given but inferred. To whatever extent they may carry their absorption in grammatical detail—however prone they may be to imply that truth is a divine emanation from the parts of speech and was materially affected at the Tower of Babel by

the confusion of tongues,¹ they assert (when they are put to it) that truth is justness of representation, precision in the correspondence between a state of mind and the original of which that state is, perhaps by way of forecast, a copy:² *La vérité consiste à imaginer les choses comme Dieu et les saints les voient.* And for insuring in matters of inference, of reasoning, this correspondence, logicians know, generally speaking, of but one device—the obtainment of principles at once universal and true, or at least “objectively valid,” and the demonstration that a given case is but a fresh instance of some one of those principles; and at one time or another logicians have undertaken to provide for both these exigencies.

So far as the first is concerned—the obtainment of principles at once universal and true—the

¹ Sigwart, for instance, finds a material difference in the same thought expressed in different idioms, *e.g.*, between “I am hungry” and “Mich hungert.” See *Logik*, vol. I, p. 76.

² See Bradley's *Principles of Logic*, book I, ch. ii. *et seq.* Aquinas (*Contra Gentiles*, lib. I, c. 59) says: “Veritas intellectus est adaequatio intellectus et rei, secundum quod intellectus dicit esse, quod est, vel non esse, quod non est.” Hamilton quotes this definition (*Lectures on Logic*, vol. 2, p. 63), and claims it for the Schoolmen. He must refer to a certain neatness in the wording simply; in substance it differs not at all from statements made by Aristotle, as is evident from the following quotations: τὸ μὲν γὰρ λέγειν τὸ ὄν μὴ εἶναι ἢ τὸ μὴ ὄν εἶναι ψεῦδος, τὸ δὲ τὸ ὄν εἶναι καὶ τὸ μὴ ὄν μὴ εἶναι ἀληθές (*Metaph.* 3, 7, 1011 b, 26 *seq.*). οὐ γὰρ διὰ τὸ ἡμᾶς οἰεσθαι ἀληθῶς σε λευκὸν εἶναι, εἰ σὺ λευκός· ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ σὲ εἶναι λευκὸν ἡμεῖς οἱ πάντες τοῦτο ἀληθεύομεν (*Id.* 8, 10, 1051 b, 6 *seq.*). οὐ γὰρ ἔστι τὸ ψεῦδος καὶ τὸ ἀληθές ἐν τοῖς πράγμασι, . . . ἀλλ' ἐν διανοίᾳ (*Id.* 5, 4, 1027 b, 25).

undertaking cannot be said to have succeeded, though it has been guided by Aristotle himself, and in the present century by John Stuart Mill. Both Mill and Aristotle argued (Aristotle more naïvely perhaps than Mill, but in all essentials to the same effect), that what is found to be the fact in a number of instances, and is found not to be the fact in none, may fairly be concluded to be the fact in all.¹ In so arguing, however, it has in one form or another again and again been pointed out, they overlooked the prime distinction between the causes of belief and the grounds of belief: it is quite true that an induction by simple enumeration may produce a belief, but it cannot justify one. If we examine an *A*, and find that it is an *AB*, and an *A'*, and find that it is an *A'B'*, and so on, we shall come to the point (probably very soon) of believing that the next *A*, say *A''*, is *A''B''* before we have examined it. We shall begin to believe of any and every presented or imagined *A* that it goes with a corresponding *B*—we shall believe, as it is said (most inaccurately), that all *A* is *B*. All universal beliefs are of this character, and, many of them at least are held on this ground.² It is because empiricism

¹ *Analyt. Post.* II, 19. Topic VIII, 8.

² Sigwart perhaps has dealt with this question best. The universality of such beliefs lies not in anything apparent in the beliefs themselves, but in a certain habit of the mind—a tendency to fill out every particular instance of such and such a description that comes up by the addition of such and such qualities. The proper expression of the

maintains that all of them are so held, that as a theory of knowledge it is so open to assault. For how true soever our belief may upon examination in the case of each additional *A* prove to be, there was nothing in the manner of its introduction into the mind, nothing in the form of the process by which it was attained or in its relation to the evidence that led to it, to guarantee its truth. Ninety-nine *A*'s may be *B*, and the hundredth not—there is no impossibility, no contradiction; nor can a multiplication of the instances remedy the matter. A multiplication of instances may add firmness and certainty, indeed, to our feeling about a fresh instance, but that is a psychological assurance, not a logical one.

Supposing certain general principles, however, to have been obtained, or to be given, logic has been more successful, it has been thought, in providing a way of passing in security from those general principles to an instance (or a class of instances) which they include. To do them justice, logicians generally have been shy of induction, but on the syllogism they have felt that they could rely. If all men are mortal, and if philosophers are men, it seems to follow with the necessity which was wanting in induction, that philosophers are mortal; the syllogism, tendency as is indicated in the text, is not "All *A* is *B*," but "Any *A* is *B*," or "Every *A* is *B*." An analysis of a hypothetical judgment or belief has been given already (*Supra*, p. 98); and a universal judgment or belief, as Mr. Bradley among others has made plain, is simply a hypothetical one.

it seems, may be accused more plausibly of begging the question than of not making out a case. Nevertheless it may be safely said to carry with it no greater guarantee—to be *formally* no more cogent—than induction by simple enumeration. Cogency, of course, it has, but, as in the case of induction by simple enumeration, the hold it possesses on the mind is psychological only, not logical. The proof of this is to be found in the first instance in psychology.

The nature of the process of inference may perhaps be seen most clearly by the consideration of an actual case—that of the discovery that the diamond is combustible. Newton had observed, in a number of instances, that transparent bodies made up of combustible matter refract light in a high degree; it struck him that another transparent body, the diamond, refracts light highly; he inferred immediately that the diamond is combustible; and experiment bore out his inference. But, aside from the truth of the inference, what was the process? It stands out in sharp relief. Newton observed a similarity in certain respects, he inferred a similarity in all other respects, except those in which experience had taught him otherwise. If he had already tried to burn the diamond and had failed, its resemblance to other transparent, highly-refracting combustibles would not have led him to attribute combustibility to it; but, experience being silent

on the point, the inference was made. To symbolize the process, let the other refracting bodies be represented by:—*T*, transparency, *C*, combustibility, *R*, refraction, and *M*, miscellaneous qualities in which they and the diamond are known to differ. The diamond has known qualities corresponding to *T* and *R*, but *C* is represented by a blank. Newton contemplated the qualities—*TCR* and *T.R'*, and believed that inappropriate circumstances *C'* would show itself in the second combination, to correspond with *C* in the first. It is, in short, the principle of the discursive intelligence, that when things are observed to be similar in some respects, there is a tendency to believe them similar in all; this tendency being counteracted, if at all, only by direct experience to the contrary, or by similar and stronger tendencies to ascribe to the object other attributes incompatible with those. The predominance of one analogy over another depends above all else on the closeness of the analogy,—in especial on that extreme closeness which is commonly called identity. Subordinate to this, interest, recency, and number of instances (improperly called “repetition”), play their part in something like the order named, but with numerous exceptions.

Now, words not less than ideas being mental phenomena, the analogy observed between two things may lie in their names as well as in their

it seems, may be accused more plausibly of begging the question than of not making out a case. Nevertheless it may be safely said to carry with it no greater guarantee—to be *formally* no more cogent—than induction by simple enumeration. Cogency, of course, it has, but, as in the case of induction by simple enumeration, the hold it possesses on the mind is psychological only, not logical. The proof of this is to be found in the first instance in psychology.

The nature of the process of inference may perhaps be seen most clearly by the consideration of an actual case—that of the discovery that the diamond is combustible. Newton had observed, in a number of instances, that transparent bodies made up of combustible matter refract light in a high degree; it struck him that another transparent body, the diamond, refracts light highly; he inferred immediately that the diamond is combustible; and experiment bore out his inference. But, aside from the truth of the inference, what was the process? It stands out in sharp relief. Newton observed a similarity in certain respects, he inferred a similarity in all other respects, except those in which experience had taught him otherwise. If he had already tried to burn the diamond and had failed, its resemblance to other transparent, highly-refracting combustibles would not have led him to attribute combustibility to it; but, experience being silent

on the point, the inference was made. To symbolize the process, let the other refracting bodies be represented by:—*T*, transparency, *C*, combustibility, *R*, refraction, and *M*, miscellaneous qualities in which they and the diamond are known to differ. The diamond has known qualities corresponding to *T* and *R*, but *C* is represented by a blank. Newton contemplated the qualities—*TCR* and *TR*, and believed that inappropriate circumstances *C* would show itself in the second combination, to correspond with *C* in the first. It is, in short, the principle of the discursive intelligence, that when things are observed to be similar in some respects, there is a tendency to believe them similar in all; this tendency being counteracted, if at all, only by direct experience to the contrary, or by similar and stronger tendencies to ascribe to the object other attributes incompatible with those. The predominance of one analogy over another depends above all else on the closeness of the analogy,—in especial on that extreme closeness which is commonly called identity. Subordinate to this, interest, recency, and number of instances (improperly called “repetition”), play their part in something like the order named, but with numerous exceptions.

Now, words not less than ideas being mental phenomena, the analogy observed between two things may lie in their names as well as in their

other attributes ; a similarity of name, not less than similarity in any other detail, may be the ground on which there is inferred similarity in all other respects. Someone says, "There is a man in the hall." We have not seen him, and all we know, by observation, of the person, or rather of the *ens*, is that it is called by the name "man". But in this attribute of being called "man" it resembles other entities, with attributes of animality, sensibility, rationality the human aspect, and the rest. These qualities, it is therefore immediately inferred, characterize the being in the hall—or rather qualities similar to, these ; the connecting link being similarity in name. It may be objected that all these qualities are *connoted* by the word "man", and that to attribute them to the being affirmed to be a man involves no more than a mere interpretation of the word used. Call it interpretation if you like ; it is still a process indistinguishable from that of inference. We believe something not yet intuited by us, because of something that we have intuited ; our belief that there is a being in the hall possessing certain attributes is an inference from certain sounds heard, similar sounds in the past having been applied with some exclusiveness to beings distinguished by such attributes. The interpretation is in short a matter of known likeness in one respect and resulting inference of likeness in

others. What others? Those others that "experience" has "shown" to be certified by the attribute of being called by the name "man"—or the other attributes that things named "man" have usually been found to possess. The similarity in one respect leads us to infer similarity in all other respects except those in which experience has "shown" us that similarity cannot "truthfully" be inferred.

In this instance the ground of the inference is a similarity in names, in verbal or conventional attributes, and the conclusion drawn is the existence of a similarity in real or unconventional attributes. There are, however, instances in which the conclusion and the grounds of inference alike relate only to conventional attributes. If an object be denominated "man", we may infer not only that it possesses the quality of mortality ; we may infer also that it may be called by the name "mortal." Nor does this inference necessarily take place only because we have already inferred that the object displays the qualities connoted by "mortal." We are told that *A* is *B*, and that John is *A* ; immediately we infer that what is called John, resembling certain things called *B* in being called *A*, may be called *B* ; and this though as yet we know neither the denotation nor the connotation of any one of the terms used. It may be, nay often is, that only after reaching the inference that John is *B*, we

learn the connotation of B ; we have substituted conventional qualities or signs for real or unconventional qualities or signs, and lost sight of the meaning of the arbitrary symbols until we have done working with them. We habitually use arithmetical signs in this way, in utter oblivion of their signification. The signs, $5 \times 5 =$ remind us of like signs in the past, $5 \times 5 = 25$; and immediately the similarity in the first terms of these equations leads us to fill out by analogy the blanks in the second; If $5 \times 5 =$ was coupled with 25 then, so it should be now, and we write it down, $5 \times 5 = 25$. Indeed we not only do use arithmetical signs, not to speak of algebraic, in this way, but we can use them in no other when the numbers become large.

This sort of substitution carries with it, however, certain dangers as well as certain advantages. Signs, whether written or spoken, are things with qualities of their own (their possession of a "meaning" being in some sort an accident in their history), and bear toward one another relations that must either correspond to the relations subsisting between the things signified or be neglected in argument; the similarity between the sounds "light" and "light," for instance, must either be matched by a similarity in their significations or must be left out of account in ratiocination, on pain of absurdities like the following:

Light is contrary to darkness.

Feathers are light.

Feathers are contrary to darkness.

Against every form of this liability to error those who purpose to reason with signs at all (and who does not?) require to be put on their guard. It may be done in two ways. They may be put in possession of the principle of error and be left to apply it at their own discretion, as men may be put in possession of the principle of incorrect speech as the departure from good usage. Or the several errors to which this principle leads may be noted and classified, and there may be compiled a system of precepts—a grammar, in effect,—for the avoidance of them. Now the syllogistic logic clearly consists of a set of just such precepts; it is the Grammar, not indeed of Assent, but of reasoning in signs, and coming to the same results as if the reasoning were in ideas. Rule 1:—In every syllogism there must be three terms and only three. That is to say, none of the terms must be ambiguous; we must not, from a similarity of words, conclude a similarity of qualities, unless the similar words possess like meanings; were our attention fixed on the things signified we should not do so—we should be in no danger, for instance, of concluding that feathers are contrary to darkness, on the ground that they are light. Rule 2:—In every syllogism

there must be three propositions and only three. That is to say, there are three steps in the reasoning process, one represented in each proposition. We are aware of a certain class of objects as being of a certain description—"Men are mortal;" we perceive another object that resembles them in its known qualities—"Socrates is a man;" we (quite involuntarily) fill out the percept of that object, by the addition of such attributes as the familiar objects to which it has been assimilated are known to possess, and as it is not known not to possess,—“Socrates is mortal.” Rule 3:—The middle term must be distributed at least once in the premises. It is only when we can affirm mortality of all men in respect to whom we have been in a position to judge—only, that is, when we are prepared (after the fashion explained a moment since in speaking of induction by simple enumeration and of the nature of universal beliefs) to affirm that all men are mortal—that we are certain to attribute mortality to the next object we may assimilate to men already known. If our experience on the subject has been divided, if some men have been found to be mortal and some not, our decision may go either way in a new instance, or may remain in suspense. When, therefore, we can affirm only that in some instances we have known men to be mortal and in some not, we have no assurance that any reasoning we may do in words will

represent the reasoning we should in that case do, if we kept to our ideas; we must turn from the words to the ideas or to the facts themselves (if they be of a nature to admit of it), and this the rule about a distributed middle bids us bear in mind. And so throughout; one might go through the syllogistic logic, point by point, with the same result.

And, this being true, the supposed cogency of the syllogism is an illusion. The process of reasoning is an inference from particulars to particulars; if it is illegitimate when it is performed with ideas, or with the objects themselves directly before the mind (as we found with reference to induction by simple enumeration that it was), it is no less illegitimate—no less inconclusive *in form*—when it is performed in words, which are the symbols of ideas or (if you will) of things. A copy can possess no greater authority than its original. If in this case it appears to do so, the reason is that the original frankly confesses that it contains four terms—that its middle terms are never identical but only similar, while the copy does not; but the four terms exist in the one not less than in the other. It has been insisted with much justice,—Associationists have given occasion to their adversaries to make much of the distinction—that no mental state or bit of consciousness can be repeated; when an idea or a sensation has

once passed away it is gone for ever. A similar idea or sensation may be experienced, but never twice the same idea or sensation. But the meaning of a word is a mental phenomenon, and as such subject to this distinction. So is the word itself. It will be plain, therefore, (in especial to those who find themselves adverse to Associationism), that we can never "use the same word twice," nor "use the same word, or two different words, in the same sense;" the utmost we can do is to use like words in like senses. So that it is over no firm-built principle, such as the *Dictum de Omni*, that we pass from the premises, "All men are mortal" and "All philosophers are men," to the conclusion "All philosophers are mortal;" the "men" in the two cases are not the same—there is no foundation on which such a principle could rest. The "men" are only similar, not the same, and the principle involved is not a logical principle at all, but a psychological one—an exorbitant doctrine of analogy, which we know at a glance to be untrustworthy but are powerless to cease to trust, it being of the very essence of the mind. The certainty of the syllogism lies in the statement simply, not in the thing stated. We may admit the premises and deny the conclusion without committing a contradiction in thought; we commit a contradiction at the utmost in words. We contradict ourselves psychologically, go counter to our belief; we do not contradict our-

selves logically, do not go counter to our grounds of belief.

Nor does it seem to be possible by any change of front satisfactorily to avoid encountering this difficulty. We no longer hold, as the older textbooks taught us, that the operations of the mind

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are *in universum tres*—*Simplex Apprehensio, Judicium, Discursus*; the distinction between psychology and logic has come to be sufficiently familiar—for logic at least almost fatally familiar; almost it has come to be supposed that the logical mind and the psychological bear to one another no more intimate relation than the enchanted dreamland of the Arabian Nights bears to the obstinate mechanic drift of things that constitutes the world of science. We are perfectly instructed that there is a difference to be marked between the way in which a conclusion is in fact attained, and the way in which, when once attained, it is, if at all, to be justified. There is, however, a further distinction to be marked between ascertaining the way in which a conclusion when once attained is, if at all, to be justified, and demonstrating that that way is practicable to so limited an instrument as a critical, a metaphysically critical, psychology reveals the human mind to be. "(i) It is impossible," Mr. Bradley says, stating briefly what he regards

as two of the indispensable requirements which an inference must if it is to be justified fulfill—"it is impossible to reason except upon the basis of identity; (ii) It is impossible to reason unless at least one premise is universal. It will be time to say *vicerunt empirici* when these positions have both been forced."¹ Principles, that is in effect to say, at once universal and true must be obtained, and the case in hand must be shown to be an instance of one of them: all men, (to speak more especially of the syllogism), must be shown to be mortal, and Socrates must be identified as a man. Very good: what then? Such are indeed two indispensable requirements which an inference must if it is to be justified fulfill: if principles at once universal and true can be obtained, and if a case in hand can really be shown to be an instance of one of them, something may indeed be done: but is it possible adequately to provide for either of these conditions precedent? Until this question is answered affirmatively by a detailed statement of the precise means proper to be employed, and means too that the human intelligence in all its infirmity is able successfully to employ, logic has but defined its purpose, not achieved nor begun to achieve it. Most certainly no such affirmative answer is to be found in the syllogism. Apart from the unsolved and perhaps insoluble difficulty of obtaining principles at once universal and true,

¹ *Principles of Logic*, p. 260.

there is the metaphysical absurdity in attempting literally to identify a new case as an instance of one of them. "It is obvious," Mr. Bradley admirably says, "if we dismiss our hardened prejudices and consider the question fairly by itself, that you cannot argue on the strength of mere *likeness*. Whatever else may be right, this at all events must be wrong; 'A is similar to B, and B to C, and therefore A is like C,' is a vicious inference, one that need not always be mistaken in fact, but that always must be a logical error"—always must, that is, be lacking in conclusiveness.¹ "A construction of given premises is not possible unless each pair of premises has a common point. And this common point must be an *identical* term. Thus in "A-B, B-C, therefore A-B-C," the B in each premise must be not merely alike but must be absolutely the same.² But given the human mind as it is, the B in the two premises never can be absolutely the same. Socrates' manhood is distinct and separate from the manhood of any other man; it can at the utmost be shown to be similar to the manhood of other men. Granted, if you insist, that all men are mortal; it is absolutely on the sole "strength of a likeness" that Socrates can be declared to be a man. Nor does it seem credible that the way which Mr. Bradley discovers out of the difficulty will recommend itself

¹ *Principles of Logic*, p. 261.

² *Principles of Logic*, p. 263.

to ultimate acceptance. "We can put the thing," he says, "in more simple language, if we say that inference rests on the principle that what *seems* the same *is* the same, and cannot be made different by any diversity, and that so long as an ideal content is identical no change of context can destroy its unity. The assumption in this principle may be decried as monstrous, and I do not deny that perhaps it is false. In a metaphysical work this question would press on us, but in logic we are not obliged to discuss it. The axiom may be monstrous or again it may be true, but at least one thing is beyond all doubt, that it is the indispensable basis of reasoning. It may be false metaphysically, but there is no single inference you possibly can make but assumes its validity at every step."¹ Having declared ideal contents to be non-entities, Mr. Bradley now declares the ideal contents in question to be identical. Having demonstrated that similarity affords no basis for reasoning, he suggests that we rechristen it identity. But Mr. Bradley's demonstration holds good not against the name simply, but against the fact; if similarity affords no basis for reasoning when it is named similarity, it can scarcely be made more efficacious by a change of mere letters and syllables. Nor can it be said that this is quibbling, that what Mr. Bradley means by identity is *exact likeness*: for, "I am

¹ *Principles of Logic*, pp. 263-264.

waiting," Mr. Bradley says, "and have been waiting for years, to be told what is meant by an 'exact likeness.'" If exact likeness is less than sheer identity, no appeal to it can be of service; if exact likeness is a mere synonym for sheer identity, there is no exact likeness in the case to be appealed to. When Mr. Bradley intimates that the principle that what *seems* the same *is* the same may be decried as monstrous, he does that principle less than complete justice: the two middle terms in the syllogism do not seem to be the same, nor even merely seem to be different, they self-evidently and stubbornly are by the very fact of their duality different, they self-evidently are at the utmost in a limited number of respects similar, not the same. The principle of which Mr. Bradley is in search must run: Things which under penalty of self-contradiction cannot be more than similar must be the same. And this principle not only may be monstrous, it undeniably is monstrous; and the suggestion that it may nevertheless be true, is one to which it is not logically possible to give assent.

Nor is it the syllogism only that is in this plight—at least if we accept Mr. Bradley as our guide: non-syllogistic reasonings also are in the "same" case—it was of non-syllogistic reasonings more particularly than of the syllogism that Mr. Bradley was speaking in the passages cited above. Mr. Bradley indeed regards all reasoning as non-

sylogistic: "the syllogism," he says, "is a chimæra, begotten by an old metaphysical blunder, nourished by a senseless choice of examples, fostered by the stupid conservatism of logicians, . . . protected by the impotence of younger rivals," and scarcely to be reckoned with except as in attendance "for decent burial."¹ The major premise in especial, Mr. Bradley holds, is obviously superfluous; and he asks, "How," if inference is based on axioms, "did people reason before axioms were invented?" and challenges his reader to admit that though he feel the force of the argument: "A is to the right of B, B is to the right of C, . . . A is to the right of C," yet the the major premise involved is to him an utter stranger, an invention of Mr. Bradley's own: "A body is to the right of that which that which it is to the right of, is to the right of." "I know this major," Mr. Bradley says, "because I have just manufactured it; but you who believe in major premises and who scores of times must have made the inference, confess that you never saw this premise before."² Not quite all of this, however, will be found to be compatible with a constant command of the distinction between the logical and the psychological points of view.

At least five positions in defence of the validity of the syllogism are to the logician possible.

¹ *Principles of Logic*, p. 228.

² *Principles of Logic*, p. 227.

(1.) That the syllogism presents the analysis not merely of a formally secure process of inference, but of the process and the only process actually employed or capable of being employed by the intelligence when it infers. (2.) That though there are psychologically a number of processes which the intelligence may and does employ in inference, the syllogism presents the analysis of the only one of them that is formally secure. (3.) That however many other formally secure processes of inference may be to the intelligence possible, the syllogism presents us with at least one. (4.) That however impossible it may be to a mind like ours to practise formal correctness in the actual process of attaining its conclusions,—however incapable we may be of varying from the single formally insecure process, above described, of inference by analogy,—the syllogism supplies us with the conditions by the fulfillment of which only we can hope formally to justify our conclusions when attained. (5.) That however many other methods there may be of justifying formally our conclusions when attained, the syllogism presents us with at least one. Of these five positions the first only can be forced by Mr. Bradley's showing that there are inferences in which the implied major is an after-thought; and even that can be forced by such showing not logically, not on the side of its claim to formal cogency, but only psychologically, on the side of

its claim to psychologically exclusiveness, its claim to being the sole possible method, secure or insecure, of moving forward to a new conclusion: a claim which is on other accounts so patently indefensible that there is perhaps no one known who makes it, or, phraseology employed by the older logicians to the contrary notwithstanding (their recognition of the possibility of fallacies sufficiently correcting their language), ever has made it. The remaining four positions—the four actually occupied—lie aside from the line of Mr. Bradley's attack. In the case of the second, the possibility is recognised of there being inferences with unexpressed and even inexpressible majors: it is contended only that such inferences are not formally secure. If it be urged that the inference:—A to the right of B, B to the right of C, . . . A to the right of C—is as safe, as secure, as could be wished, the reply is, that the security which it affords is psychological only, not logical; the security results from the familiarity and simplicity of the relations concerned; it pertains not at all (Mr. Bradley, seemingly, accepts what is here denied—the formal conclusiveness of the syllogism) to the mere form of the statement. And in the case of the third position, no such reply need be offered; that there may be formally secure methods of inference other than the syllogistic is presupposed; while so far as the fourth and the fifth position are concerned, to urge that there are

inferences the major premises of which are mere after-thoughts is to fortify those positions; it is the very essence of the contention of those who maintain those positions that not only in the case of certain inferences, but in the case of every inference, the major premise (and perhaps the minor too!) is an after-thought.

It is to be added, that certain at least of the instances of non-syllogistic inference brought forward by Mr. Bradley are questionably inferences at all. Surely, to regard comparison, distinction, and recognition, as modes of inference, on the ground that they are "ideal operations which demonstrate new truth, that is, truth new to *us*,"¹ is almost deliberately to overlook the distinction which Mr. Bradley himself has emphasized between inference and observation. "There is a difference," he says, "between reasoning and mere observation; if the truth is inferred it is not simply seen, and a conclusion is never a mere perception;"² but nothing could be more simply and immediately seen than the likeness or unlikeness of two states of mind in (if Mr. Bradley insists) one's head. Mr. Bradley means, of course, that a preliminary operation must be performed on the objects to be discriminated or compared—they must be brought together before the mind; but the objects to be discriminated or compared

¹ Principles of Logic, p. 377.

² Principles of Logic, p. 225

may be already before the mind; and even if they are not, the mere act of recollection or imagination—the mere act of bringing two ideas before the mind—is no more an essential part of the distinctively intellectual process of comparing or discriminating them when brought, than a man's walking with the copy of a manuscript in his pocket to the British Museum, to collate it there with its original, is an essential part of the distinctively intellectual process of observing, when the original and copy are at last spread out before him, an agreement or a disagreement in the texts. "The logician," Mr. Bradley says, "shudders internally," when he attends a demonstration in anatomy, "at the blasphemous assertion that 'this which I hold in my hand' is 'demonstrated.'" But his trials are not over; the illiterate lecturer on cookery overwhelms him by publicly announcing "the demonstration" of an omelette to the eyes of females.² "But the logician," Mr. Bradley holds, "has no real cause of quarrel even with the cook."² "Demonstration in logic," he says, "is not totally different from demonstration elsewhere;³ and he finds the distinction between logical and non-logical demonstration to lie solely in the performance of the operation with one's hands (it seems that with one's hands one can

² Principles of Logic, p. 235.

² Principles of Logic, p. 236.

³ Principles of Logic, p. 236.

perform it!) or with one's head. "When in ordinary fact some result can be seen and is pointed out, perhaps no one would wish to call this 'demonstration.' It is mere perceiving or observation. It is called demonstration when, to see the result, it is necessary for us first to manipulate the fact; when you show within and by virtue of a *preparation* you are said to demonstrate. But if the preparation experiments outwardly, (sic), if it alters and arranges the external facts, then the demonstration is not an *inference*. It is an inference where the preparation is *ideal*, where the rearrangement which displays the unknown fact is an operation in our heads. . . . Let us take an instance from geographical position. A is ten miles north of B, B is ten miles east of C, D is ten miles north of C; what is the relation of A to D? If I draw the figure on a piece of paper, that relation is not inferred; but if I draw the lines in my head, in that case I reason."² Surely, it may be said rather that, so far as Mr. Bradley's statement goes, there is no inference in either case. If inspection of the lines drawn on paper gives immediate and therefore not inferential knowledge of the relation between point A and point D, inspection of the lines imagined on paper, or drawn (if Mr. Bradley insists) in one's head, gives immediate and therefore not inferential knowledge of the relation between the imagined

² Principles of Logic, p. 238.

point A and the imagined point D. The fact is, that Mr. Bradley has in appearance made out a case for himself only by beginning his analysis in the middle, and even then, only by declining to pursue it beyond a certain point. One of the only two inferences conceivable in the example which he has chosen lies beyond the point where Mr. Bradley's analysis pauses; lies, as he would say, in "referring away" the result of the inspection to reality; lies in the interpretation, in the sense of that word defined already in the analysis of reasoning in words, of the lines and letters in the drawing by him supposed; lies in the involuntary rearrangement in the details of one's vision of the world which results from that inspection; lies in one's seeing, with one's "mind's eye," in one's *Weltbild*, the object symbolized in the drawing by the letter A assuming toward the object symbolized by the letter D a relation analogous to that immediately observed, intuited, between the letters A and D drawn or imagined on the page, or in one's head. This latter part only of the process, this interpretation only, is inferential; and it cannot, one need hardly say, be performed with the hands. The other of the only two inferences conceivable in the example which Mr. Bradley has chosen takes place prior to the point at which Mr. Bradley's analysis begins, and consists in the involuntary mental processes which control the choice of the symbols and the drawing of the

lines consists in the construction, by analogy to some known matter of topography, which Mr. Bradley has not specified, of the mental scheme of lines of which the drawing on paper is at best but a copy. And this, Mr. Bradley, inconsistently and insufficiently enough, in a manner recognizes: the mental construction must not, he says, be formed "arbitrarily," or it will not be formed "logically," and we shall have no reason to think that our inference from that construction is true. "If we took A-B and C-D and joined them together as A-B-C-D, our procedure would be as futile as if in anatomy we showed connections by manufacturing them. . . . We cannot logically join our premises into a whole unless they offer us points of connection."² But if our drawing, our construction, is governed by something else, it is in the act of government, and not in any inspection of the result, that the process of the inference consists. "If the terms between which the relations subsist," Mr. Bradley continues, "are all of them different, we are perfectly helpless, for we cannot make an arch without a keystone. Hence, if we are to construct, we must have an identity of the terminal points. Thus in A-B, B-C, B is the same, and we connect A-B-C; in A-B-C and C-D, C is the same, and we connect A-B-C-D. The operation consists in the extension and enlargement of one datum by others, by

² *Principles of Logic*, pp. 236-237

means of the identity of common links. And because these links of union were given us, therefore we assume that our construction is true; although we have made it, yet it answers to the facts."² That is in other words to say somewhat unanalytically and ambiguously, yet with sufficient clearness (when we stop to recollect that the construction must not be arbitrary and that by identity Mr. Bradley means similarity), that inference consists in involuntarily conceiving or picturing the unknown by analogy with the known: the formula for psychological inference reached above.³ That all inferences are of this form the sceptic will hasten to agree. That no inference of this form can be conclusive, and that neither induction by simple enumeration, nor the syllogism, nor any other logical device, presents the means of making inference in this form conclusive, the sceptic, following Mr. Bradley's lead, expressly contends. Let the principles of mathematics, or of what you will, be as unquestionable as you please, not one step in any reasoning is "logically sound.

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This does not mean, of course, that even from the sceptic's point of view the syllogism and induction by simple enumeration are useless—that

² *Principles of Logic*, p. 237.

³ *Supra*, pp. 105-6

logicians, from Aristotle down, have laboured in vain; it means simply that logicians have laboured other than they knew—that they have failed in the comparatively easy task of giving a good of themselves. To supply, in a measure, their deficiency in this respect it is necessary for the sceptre to begin some distance back, considering first the meaning properly attached to the word "truth."

Truth, we have seen, has been declared to be justness of representation, precision in the correspondence between a mental copy, or forecast, and its original. And so far as memories and inferences are concerned, this is sufficiently intelligible. They at least, it may be argued, represent something, or are supposed to do so—may conceivably do so; in them the *διάνοια* and the *πράγμα* may be regarded as distinct and separate. But intuitions also are true, and that more certainly than memories or inferences, yet surely not in the sense of precisely representing anything. Intuitions represent nothing, they are by definition presentative, not representative—in them the *διάνοια* and the *πράγμα* are one. In what sense, then, are *they* true? They can hardly be left out of account. A list of things true that should contain no mention of intuitions would be like a catalogue of nobles that omitted princes, or a theory of vegetation that took no cognizance of roots.

The fact is, that definitely as we may believe ourselves to mean justness of representation by

the word "truth," it is almost never because we perceive that quality in our thoughts that we judge them to be true. Except in a restricted class of instances, to be mentioned presently, we never can perceive it. To do so would require us to compare the copies in our mind with their originals, and observe to what extent they agree. But the originals of our memories (unless, indeed, the whole affair of the past is an illusion—we should find it hard enough to prove that it is not!) were certain fleeting sensations, and other modes of consciousness, which are not now in existence, or at least are not accessible. The originals of our inferences are certain fleeting sensations, and other modes of consciousness, which are not in existence yet, and perhaps never were, nor will be: in the smallest number of cases we can wait until they come about, and can then assure ourselves that our forecast was what it should have been (provided that our memory does not deceive us, and we really made such a forecast); but this is commonly not possible, even when the inference relates to the actual future; and not infrequently the inference relates not to what will happen but to what might happen, or might have happened *if* so-and-so, and is avowedly an attempt to strike off a facsimile of what never was and never will be.

We do, however, constantly discriminate true memories from false; though we never suppose that we can take down the back volumes of our

life, like the back numbers of a magazine, and turn to the required page, we are continually feeling that this recollection is confirmed and that one proved mistaken. And were anyone to ask us how we do so, we should reply, no doubt, "By its correspondence, or lack of correspondence with facts." We remember, for example, burning yesterday a bundle of letters. We find charred fragments of them this morning in the grate—our memory has been, not proven, perhaps, but at least substantiated. Or we find the bundle intact on the mantel-piece—our memory has been disproved. And this is, no doubt, a true account of the matter as far as it goes; but note in what the substantiation or disproof consists. It does not consist in a revelation of a simple conformity or non-conformity to bygone facts—there is no suggestion in it of the thing remembered arising from the past to be confronted with its ideal double. The letters we saw yesterday, and see in ashes or unharmed to-day, are not demonstrably the same letters; speaking strictly, the fact that we remember is certain sensations and perceptions, and the fact that we experience to-day is certain other sensations and perceptions, in themselves distinct and separate from any we were ever subject to before. (Even Associationists may be supposed to have learned at last that a mental state which once disappears never comes again—although indeed it is not they who

have shown themselves most culpably unaware of it.) The case is, that from our memory of having burned the letters we inferred that we should never have again sensations and perceptions of just the kind, that constitute our consciousness of taking the bundle off the mantel and examining the handwriting. This inference being at fault, we hold the memory disproved. Or we inferred that we might have the sensations and perceptions that constitute our consciousness of beholding the charred fragments, and, this inference proving correct, we hold the memory confirmed. The principle seems to be that the memory which leads to true inferences is an accurate transcript of the past, and that the memory which leads to inferences of the opposite kind is false.

How frankly superior to evidence this principle is, need scarcely be remarked. Direct evidence there can, of course, be none—to obtain it we should need access to the past for the purpose of collating it with the memories that lead to true and to false inferences respectively; and as for indirect evidence, it is conceivable that all our memories should be false and all our inferences from them true. Were this the case, it is hard to say how we should ever find it out. Suppose a being created at this instant exactly like one's self—nervous system and all, if indeed the nervous system be the organ of mind and the picture-gallery of the past. He would have memories

in all essentials like one's own, and grounds as unimpeachable for regarding them as true; yet every one of them would be false, even to the fact of there having been a past time—at least for him. It may seem indeed that we can extract some comfort from the doctrine of the uniformity of nature; it may be argued that if the course of nature really be uniform—if the future be connected with the past in certain uniform ways—an accurate forecast of the future along those lines is evidence of our possessing a trustworthy clue also to the past. But to argue thus is really to beg the question; any showing that there is order in the world must presuppose the trustworthiness of memory. Without that, even a Kantian could prove only that we are at this passing moment under a certain subjective necessity of conceiving the world as orderly, whether it is so or not, just as we are under a subjective necessity of conceiving a time prior to the present, whether it existed or not, and prior also to the existence of any empirical ego. And a Humean has not the benefit of even this poor shift; he can only recognize another imperfection in the instrument that he is obliged to labour with. The worst of the thing is its fatality its irremediableness. The principle in question is not one that we have picked up and can lay down (we would discard it on the instant, if it were); it is in the make and tissue of the mind.

Just as we must infer that things which are alike in certain respects are alike in others in which they are not known to be unlike, so we must regard memories which lead to true inferences as true, and memories which lead to false inferences as untrue, though in the one case as in the other we are perfectly aware that the proceeding is unjustifiable.

But we decide also (which seems to be the point on which all turns) concerning the truth and falsity of inferences, and that not solely by the brutal expedient, so seldom possible or even desirable, of awaiting the event, but by reflection; and the question is, "By reflection on what?" Here again, as in the case of memory, the natural answer seems to be, "By reflection on the facts." We reject an inference that it is possible for a given man to do thus and so—it is inconsistent with all that we have ever seen or heard of human capabilities. And if this were an accurate account of the matter, or rather a complete account (for accurate it is), we should have attained the unprofitable conclusion that our memories are tested by our inferences and our inferences by our memories; but the case is not so desperate as that. The inconsistency does not lie between a present (actual or possible) inference and certain remembered facts—the inference does not relate to the remembered facts, to the men that one has known

or heard of before; it lies simply between an inference from those facts and the present inference. From something that we know of the given man—something, it may be, that is reported of him—we infer that he can do thus and so; from something else that we know of him, his similarity to other men, we infer that he cannot. These two inferences are incompatible—it is an observed fact that we cannot entertain them both at the same time. Whichever gives place, whichever has to run in debt to the will in order to maintain itself in the struggle for existence, ceases to be held true, ceases to constitute an inference, a belief. The principle is that the persistent inference is the true inference, and therefore, if by truth we are to understand justness of representation, that justness of representation always coexists with the ability of self-maintenance to the exclusion of all inconsistent details in one's vision of the world.

That this principle is not meant to bear inspection, is tolerably obvious. Presentative cognitions (intuitions) possess *par excellence* the ability of self-maintenance to the exclusion of all inconsistent details in one's vision of the world; but justness of representation, as has been already noticed, cannot be attributed to them. Or if it be objected that it is only in respect to inferences that the coexistence and companionship of these two qualities need be maintained, the reply is

that we are a dozen times a day reminded by experience of inferences contradicting one another, that they do not coexist. If it be still objected that they have been found to coexist on the whole, the reply is threefold. (1.) This appeal to experience is an appeal to memory, and the trustworthiness of memory is one of the very things that are here in question. (2.) Even if it could be established that the principle on which we depend in judging inferences had been trustworthy in the past, it does not follow that it will be so in the future. Conditions may be preparing which to-morrow will evolve a universe wherein everything will be strange to us. Should this be so, there is no reason to suppose our present memories and inferences would be at all different from what they are. (3.) The principle under consideration is not held on evidence; it is not itself an inference; it is logically prior to all inferences; it is not a product of the "mind," but a part of the "mind," and from the point of view of metaphysics a very lamentable part.

All of which (actually to cross the threshold of the obvious, about which the argument has long been hovering) leads to the expedient statement of what everybody is ready to let pass approvingly so long as the speaker does not raise his voice. Some memories, everybody admits must be inaccurate, and some inferences; and that the attri-

bute by which they ultimately come to be recognised as such is their failure to maintain themselves, their failure in persistence, in predominance, is implied in common speech. If we consider what beliefs we call true (meaning by beliefs our intuitions, memories, and inferences, the whole *extent*, in brief, of the term "true"), we find that they differ from all other rival or possible beliefs in this, that we believe them. Of the doctrines we do not accept, we say that they are not true, or that it is doubtful whether they are true—*i.e.*, that we are ourselves in doubt about them. If we say we believe a thing, we give no additional information by adding that we believe it to be true. When, as often happens, some belief we hold is shown to be inconsistent with another that we hold still more strongly, the instant that the former ceases to be believed we cease to denominate it true, and begin to denominate it false. Nor can it be claimed that in this version of the matter there is committed the fallacy of *ὑδτερον πρότερον* and that we cease to believe because we have first recognised a failure justly to represent; for it has been seen that we cease to believe in the great majority of cases under circumstances in which no such failure is perceived, or could have been perceived. The beliefs of a person of wide experience are regarded as more trustworthy, other things equal, than those of a person of narrow experience, because they have persisted

in the face of more "evidence:" it is more probable, or rather more credible (not unnecessarily to run the risk of a contest in regard to the theory of probabilities) that the wide experience of such a person will have made apparent whatever latent conflict may exist between his beliefs and any rival ones that might displace them; such a person is not so likely to find himself obliged to change his mind. So too we allow more readily that the beliefs of a reflective person are likely to be true than those of an unreflective person; reflection weeds out inconsistencies in one's beliefs, disclosing the antagonism between beliefs held at different times and never brought into comparison before. The elimination of inconsistencies is merely a process of discovering which of a group of incompatible inferences is the predominant one; considered as a process of guaranteeing the validity of the beliefs left over, it assumes that in beliefs persistence is the mark of truth.

Here, then, is the somewhat anomalous conclusion. Truth and falsity are almost always clearly defined in one meaning, and almost always used in another. "True" formally connotes justness of representation, and should be applied only to beliefs displaying that quality. But, so far as we can tell at any given moment, there are no such beliefs. At the instant an inference is "verified" (which seldom happens), the belief

becomes presentative, and the moment afterwards it becomes but one element in a memory. Whether our memories and inferences do possess or not the attribute of justly representing the past and future, and perforce it must be added the conditional past and future, it is certain they keep it a close secret; if they have it, we can never discover its presence; if they have it not, we are equally unable to discover its absence. Our application to any given belief of the word "true" is determined therefore, not by accuracy of representation, which we cannot judge of, but by a very different and entirely disconnected quality—persistence in the face of inconsistent beliefs. Unable to secure an agreement between the copies and the originals, we set about diligently to secure an agreement among the copies. Taking the meaning of the word, not from the official, formal definition, but from the very stamp and die of the mind, the true belief is the one that will continue to be held under all possible turns of reflection and experience; and truth, in the most absolute sense in which we can profitably propose it as an ideal of human endeavour, is synonymous with the sort of predominance that would be displayed by the beliefs of one who at any given instant had digested all his "knowledge" into a body of doctrine in which there lurked no latent inconsistencies—a predominance not to be disturbed, that is, by further thought. Disturbance

by further experience it is not in our power to guard against.

4.

For assisting us to the attainment of this ideal of consistency, or, say, to an approximation to it, it is reasonably plain that induction by simple enumeration and the syllogistic logic are instruments especially adapted—one might almost say designed. The former bids us set out quite explicitly all the "facts" we "know" that are relevant to the inference to be tested (*πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντα*). No better or other method could be devised for bringing to light, where it exists, an inference incompatible with the present one, and more predominant than it, (we have already seen that the incompatibility lies not directly between the present inference and the remembered "facts," but between it and the inferences from those facts); all other methods, with one doubtful exception, are in essence this. But a relevant instance is a somewhat elusive phenomenon, in especial when it takes the shape of an irrelevant relevant instance: the memory must be prodded to do its work with anything like completeness. Mere intensity of attention and repeated efforts are capable, no doubt, of securing this end so far as it is attainable, and in any event they are necessary; but putting our reasonings into words (it is

the merest commonplace) serves the same purpose more expeditiously, and with a less expenditure of power, a smaller mental strain. Now, the syllogistic logic supplies us with a system of rules for making this statement complete, and for guarding against certain dangers that are incidental to so doing; and in making it complete, makes it in several ways more efficacious. It bids us "define" every word, and make sure of the "truth" of every proposition—it makes, that is, not our conclusion only, as inductive logic does, but every step in our reasoning and every element in those steps, a fresh starting-point for rummaging the memory; and, presenting the things to be done in a systematic way, it minimizes the danger of inadvertently supposing we have exhausted all our clues before we have done so really.

The relation of induction by simple enumeration and of the syllogism to the ideal of predominance, or relative stability, is direct and obvious; but there are three other possible tests of truth, or possible aids at least to its ascertainment, whose relation to that ideal needs perhaps to be made clear.

(1) It has been seen that our belief in a general or universal proposition is not, strictly speaking, a belief in a single proposition at all, but a disposition to believe an infinity of particular propositions of a certain kind; and that disposition

has been symbolized as the mental habit that grows up, when a number of *A*'s have been found to be *B*, of filling out the mental image of the next *A* that occurs by the addition in idea of an appropriate *B*. Now it is tolerably plain in what the testing of the truth of such a universal proposition should consist; in the ascertaining, namely, whether such a habit does in fact exist. This can be ascertained thoroughly by nothing less than a review of all the *A*'s "known" to us, in the manner induction by simple enumeration suggests, and an inquiry whether they all point to *B* or at least whether they point to *B* so predominantly as to leave small doubt that in any future case the exceptions met with in the past will be neglected. And supposing this review to have been made and the habit of connecting *A* and *B* established, it is in a sense plain that a further review need not be made in the case of the next *A*, nor of the next, nor of the next. Virtually, it has been made already—made beforehand. If the review in the case of *A* tenth was exhaustive, we are certain what the result of a repetition of that review for the benefit of *A* eleventh would bring forth. Not logically certain of course (logical certainty attaching, as has perhaps sufficiently been shown, to intuitions only), but psychologically certain, and often enough most mistakenly so, as it turns out; we remember making the review with more care and

completeness than we have either time or opportunity to make it now, and we remember nothing that has happened since to change the result. This is the *rationale* of the mental satisfaction, such as it is, that we feel in recognizing a strange case as but a fresh instance of an "established principle":—we have already tested it, and that with the last degree perhaps of thoroughness; it comes to us stamped with authority.

But the analogy between a fresh case and the instances included under the general principle may be by no means of an obvious kind. The qualities by virtue of which the *A*'s already known have been classed together may be of a sort not open to inspection; it may require indeed a proceeding of some complication and delicacy to lay them open. If so, and if the principle is at all important, the proceeding (or proceedings, where the qualities in question may be approached from more than one side) should be fitly described and recorded. And if the principle be of supreme importance and of constant use, the directions for those preliminary processes may not unjustly be included and discussed in a treatise on logic—the general arsenal of the weapons the collective intelligence has devised for its own aid in its contest with error. The law of causation is such a principle, and the so-called canons of induction (the title is clearly a misnomer) were supposed by the logician who first treated of them as a branch

of his subject to be just such preliminary directions. They are at present undergoing their baptism by fire; there is no need to enter into the merits of that controversy here. It is enough that so long as the relation of cause and effect continues to be one that does not lie open to inspection, the Inductive Canons, or something corresponding to them (if indeed anything corresponding to them can be devised that will bear criticism) may fitly occupy a place in logic, and that this place has been here accurately assigned.

(2) There are alleged to be certain principles, among them the law of universal causation, the opposites of which are inconceivable. This means—or seems at least to mean—that the mental images of the particular instances included under those principles cannot, so far as the qualities concerned in the principles are involved, be altered by any effort of the will. It might be difficult to prove that there are such principles, but if there be, a collection of them might not unfitly be given a place in logic, whether we believe them to be logically prior to experience (or at any rate logically independent of it), or logically subsequent to experience. To the Humean, they are principles which he cannot feel it to be likely that any review of the past will shake—and that is all a Humean can say for any principle; to the follower of Reid or of Kant, they are principles that no review of the past can shake. Such lights should not be

hidden under a bushel—the inquirer who wishes to furnish his mind with all available tests of truth should not be left to discover these for himself. If it is the business of logic to present us with the tests of truth, logic should present us with these. It should be understood, however, in what their efficacy consists. As warrants of stability, there can be made out for them some sort of case. The Humean complains, indeed, that he has at times been deceived by them—that that of which he took the opposite to be inconceivable, turned out upon a narrower review to be unable to maintain itself; but the fact that they sometimes lead one astray is no sufficient ground for dismissing them altogether. What could the Humean bring forward in their place that had not led one astray? But as warrants for anything beyond mere stability, and that of the limited kind here in question, there can be made out for them no case. The follower of Reid may be indulged to the height of his bent in showing that they are imbedded in the mind; that much more formidable personage, the follower of Kant, may be indulged to the height of his bent in showing that they are conditions prior to experience; but, without putting a naive faith in memory, neither of them can show that before the present moment one had a mind or an experience; nor, without putting an equally naive faith in inference, that one will have a mind or an experience at any

period hereafter, or that, if one have, it will not be of a totally different nature, or subject to totally different conditions.

(3) It has thus far been assumed that everyone does his own thinking—that each mind is a distinct and separate standard of the truth. And unless truth is to be regarded as a social convention, and subject in the last resort to decision by the ballot, so each mind is; but it is notorious that some one else may set our mental stores in order for us—usually much better than we can set them in order for ourselves. Publicity and discussion is, in essence, this, and we feel very justly a diffidence about any doctrine that has not yet been submitted to this ordeal. This vicarious reflection reduced to a method is of course the Platonic dialectic.

Here, then, are the salient features of the view of logic which a strict regard for the demands made by the intellect leads us to entertain. For ascribing truth, in the sense of justness of representation, to our beliefs, we can find no warrant either in induction, or deduction, or intuition, or memory, or inference. Truth, so far as we may suppose it to be attainable more or less completely by reflection, resolves itself into a certain sort of stability, or predominance. As “aids to reflection” in this pursuit, the collective intelligence has thrown off the following devices: (1) Induction by simple enumeration, which (with a

doubtful exception) is the foundation of all the rest, and the least elaborated, unless Locke's little book *On the Conduct of the Human Understanding* be taken as an essay on it; (2) The syllogistic logic, whose utility it is hard to overestimate—though its professors have century after century shown themselves competent to that feat; (3) indirect induction, or proof by reference to a previously established principle; and incidental to this the so-called canons of induction; (4) The inconceivability of the opposite, which is the doubtful exception referred to above; (5) Discussion, and Dialectic as its most searching form.

CHAPTER V

THE UNITY OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

I.

And all this, the adversaries of the sceptic cry, is extravagant beyond the bounds of comedy—this reinterpretation of logic, this redefinition of truth, this assault on transcendentalism, this defence at any hazard, against all the world, of the sole validity of the Specious Present. The sceptic knows nothing except the Specious Present, yet is apodictually shocked at the bare suggestion that the future may be contemporaneous with the past. He knows nothing, nothing whatever, of the past and the future, (*the* past, *the* future!), not even that the past has existed nor that the future will exist; yet he is positive to the point of demonstration, in whatever sense there can be a demonstration, that the future has not existed, and that the past will not exist, and that neither the past nor the future do exist, and in especial that they are not one but two; he distinguishes trenchantly between these

dual non-entities and is prepared argumentatively to demonstrate what attributes may and what may not in "reason" be ascribed to them. We know nothing, he holds, not even the existence, of any mind other than our own, and of our own we know the passing moment only; but we can distinguish with a certain neatness of limitation between our mind and any mind other than our own, and between moments passing, past, and to be past, and in our distinctions can avail ourselves if it aids devised by "the collective intelligence" from century to century, in especial of the syllogists logic and Locker's little book, and we know that a mental state once gone can never again return, and that other minds cannot know the future and the past except as we know them—cannot, that is, know them at all—and cannot know our minds without by the very fact of that knowledge becoming one with our minds. The unity of two related terms in a single consciousness consists in their relations being "known;" "precisely in what the unity of consciousness consists," it was said, "is this immediate knowledge of relations—the presentment of the relations along with the related terms;"² but the related terms are two things, separate and distinct; and the relation between them is *tertium quid* that may exist, as in the case for instance of a past and present thought, when at

² *Supra* p. 54.

least one of the *relata* is extinct; and the existence of a relation is one thing and a consciousness of its existence is another. Precisely in what the unity of consciousness therefore consists is the addition to two things possessing no unity with each other of a third thing possessing no unity with either, which, by an exception to the sceptics "familiar" rule that a thought and the object of that thought are one, knows a fourth thing not in consciousness at all!—nay, in the addition to these four things, since they must all of them in turn be related and those relations must be known, of at least ten further things; and in the addition to these fourteen on the score of their relations and a knowledge of their relations, of at least a hundred and seventy further things; and so on by lengthening leaps towards infinity. A thought and the object of that thought must needs, according to the sceptic's theory, be one—there is nothing behind memory nor in front of expectation nor beyond intuition;² either therefore there is no such thing as the thought of a succession, of a change, or of a similarity, or of a coexistence, or of one thing to the right or to the left of another, or of a thing in motion—all which is contrary to the familiar, fact; or the thought of a succession must in empiricism's charitable phrase that covers a multitude of sophistries "consist in" a succession of thoughts

² *Supra* pp. 76, 77.

and the thought of a change must consist in a change of thought, and the thought of a similarity in a similarity of thoughts, and the thought of a coexistence in a coexistence of thoughts, and the thought of one thing to the right or the left of another in one thought to the right or the left of another, and the thought of a motion in the motion of a thought. But a succession of thoughts can as such possess no unity. The first thought cannot know the second, the second cannot know the first, the first thought knows itself only, the second thought knows itself only; there *is* no second thought to be known till the first has ceased to be, and no first thought to know or to be known by the time the second has begun to be; and so on, in the case of the second thought and the third, and of the third thought and the fourth, to the series' end. And the series "as a whole" cannot constitute a thought of the succession, because internally the series "as a whole" is precisely not a whole but a row of disconnected units, no two of which are ever in existence at any one time; precisely what is lacking to that in which, on the sceptic's theory, the series as a whole consists, is "consistency." And a change of thought possesses not indeed too little unity for the sceptics thesis, but too much. "Change, it is evident," so Mr. Bradley says, "must be change of something." In contrast to a mere succession of loose and separate units, change is by definition

a succession of phases of one and the same perduring something. But a thought is and can be no more than it is perceived to be. A changed thought is a different thought. There is no identity possible between a present thought and a thought no longer present—between a somewhat existent and a somewhat non-existent; it is not in the insubstantial, fleeting, evanescent nature of an essence that is mental to endure. The succession of so-called phases must exhaust all that portion of a change of thought which is mental, and the mental portion is the whole, and a change of thought and therefore the thought of a change is a sheer impossibility. And if the thought of a similarity “consists in” a similarity of thoughts, then neither of the thoughts taken separately can know the similarity, for that thought would *ipso facto* cease to be merely a similar thought; it would in violation of the hypothesis become a thought of similarity, to be in its turn resolved into a similarity of thoughts, and so on to infinity. And for each of the thoughts taken separately to know the similarity, would but multiply the difficulty, and involve the additional paradox that fewer than two thoughts of one similarity cannot exist; and if a similarity of distinct and separate thoughts, one in “one mind” and one in “another mind,” does not constitute a thought of their similarity, it is inconceivable how a mere similarity of equally distinct and separate thoughts in the

“same mind” should constitute a thought of their similarity—unless indeed, according to the favorite formula of empiricism, precisely in what their being in the same mind “consists” is in their “constituting” a thought of their own similarity. And it is not easy to divine by what miracle of deftness even this device could be made to serve in the case of a thought to the right or to the left of another, or of a moving thought—or rather a thought in motion. A thought in motion!

The plain fact is—is it not?—continue the adversaries of the sceptic, that in his effort to sever the Specious Present from all necessary connection with anything beyond itself the sceptic has inadvertently destroyed its inner unity. In the interests of a fantastic intellectual economy he has denied his epistemology the “necessities of experience.” Contract the circle of the Specious Present as narrowly as one may; so long as circumference and centre do not coincide, so long as the Specious Present is more than a mere vanishing point, so long as it is spacious enough to include or to constitute a denial that anything but itself can be known, it must consist in a diversity of elements held together in a unity of which the necessary logical implications transcend the Specious Present. The instant the Specious Present becomes a whole, it ceases to be merely its parts—merely the loose and separate

elements in which it "consists;" it becomes what is a very different thing, the sum of its parts. The instant the Specious Present presents itself as a *Weltbild* of the moment, as an orderly vision of the world, it consists in more than the mere "togetherness in the mind" of the ideas into which that vision is in part analysable; it consists in thoughts of successions and changes and similarities and dispositions to the right and left and indefinitely much besides, together with everything (since to be actual is *a fortiori* to be possible!) that these necessarily involve. The categories—at the least categories of some sort—are immanent in the most limited conceivable bit of consciousness; it is therein precisely, rather than in any such considerations as those on which the Humean or Berkeleyan idealist relies, that "for those," as Mr. Bradley pointedly remarks, "who understand," the sufficient proof of idealism has been found to consist: the world of experience consists less in the isolated qualities—the qualities that qualify paradoxically nothing—with which Berkeley was for the most part content exclusively to deal, than in this composition into objects and in the orderly arrangement of these objects in relation to one another; and if the intelligence which alone is competent to apprehend such composition and arrangement is by its nature one that must have brought about the very composition and arrangement it apprehends! "In order that

successive feelings may be related objects of experience, even objects related in the way of succession, there must be in consciousness an agent which distinguishes itself from the feelings, uniting them in their severalty, making them equally present in their succession. And so far from this agent being reducible to, or derivable from, a succession of feelings, it is the condition of their being such a succession—the condition of the existence of that relation between feelings, as also of those other relations which are indeed not relations between feelings, but which, if they are matters of experience, must have their being in consciousness. If there is such a thing as a connected experience of related objects, there must be operative in consciousness a unifying principle which not only presents related objects to itself, but at once renders them objects and unites them in relation to each other by this act of preservation; and which is single throughout experience. The unity of this principle must be correlative to the unity of the experience.—The source of the relations and the source of our knowledge of them is one and the same."¹

The sceptic as such indeed, it is scarcely hazardous to aver, is never on really defensible grounds or even in consistency an ally of the idealist: least of all such a sceptic as we have just been listening

¹ Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, pp. 34-35. Of. *Introduction to Hume's Treatise*, Sec. 158.

to:—the reformation in question of the commonly accepted definition of truth positively by Hume's express declaration, plays into the hands not of the idealist but of the crudest of crude realists. "It seems evident," writes Hume, in one of many passages to the same effect, "that men are carried, by a natural instinct or prepossession, to repose faith in their senses; and that, without any reasoning, or even almost before the use of reason, we always suppose an external universe, which depends not on our perception, but would exist though we and every sensible creature were absent or annihilated."¹ If, as has been contended by the sceptic, truth is in a manner synonymous with predominance, with permanence; if a true belief is distinctively one that will continue to be held under all possible turns of reflection and experience; it may well seem that the belief in a universe external to us, independent of us, self-subsistent, so far at least as we are concerned and relatively permanent, may advance a claim to truth more justly than almost any other belief whatever. If it be answered that this belief is precisely one that does not continue to be held under *all* turns of reflection—that as Berkeley has sufficiently shown it involves a multitude of self-contradictions; the reply may well be that no sense of its self-contradictions can be permanently maintained—that it almost immedi-

¹ *Inquiry*, Section XII. Part I.

ately prevails over them. "Nature," Hume continues, "is always too strong for principle: And though a Pyrrhonian may throw himself and others into a momentary amazement and confusion by his profound reasonings; the first and most trivial event in life will put to flight all his doubts and scruples, and leave him the same in every point of action and speculation, with the philosophers of every other sect, or with those who never concerned themselves in any philosophical researches. When he awakes from his dream, he will be the first to join in the laugh against himself, and to confess, that all his objections are mere amusement, and can have no other tendency than to show the whimsical condition of mankind, who must act and reason and believe; though they are not able, by their most diligent inquiry, to satisfy themselves concerning the foundation of these operations, or to remove the objections which may be raised against them."¹ And, manifestly it is not only of our faith in an "external" world and in the existence of other people that all this holds, but also of our faith in memory and expectation generally as distinguished from our faith in particular memories and expectations,—our belief in our own and other people's past, in our own and other people's future: considerations such as have by the sceptic been relied on to make plain the untrustworthi-

¹ *Inquiry*, Section XII., Part II.

ness of memory and inference possess no permanent hold on the attention, prevail if at all only for the short time during which they are specially adverted to or recollected, and casually interrupt the predominance of the beliefs that they antagonize, rather than depose them. The philosophy of Reid may thus on Hume's own premises be shown to be more profound than that of Hume.

2

So far the adversaries of the sceptic. And admittedly, the sceptic answers, it was a passably diverting *jeu d'esprit* some philosophical generations since to include actuality in the essence of, say, God or the angels or what you will; to coerce God or the angels or what you would into however reluctant an existence by sheer force of definition. There is, however, a much neglected principle of metaphysics, namely, that it is not impossible for a philosopher to be mistaken about a thing even before he has examined it. (His liability to error subsequent to an examination has never been wholly disregarded.) The ground of the philosopher's being called upon at all to direct his attention to traditional notions of past and future time, unity, relation, motion, is a not unreasonably conceived suspicion that actuality may precisely not be of the essence of those objects of speech as commonly defined; that the traditional notions in respect to

them may be not in every particular, or even not in any particular, accurate, may be not improbably even psychic *fili nullius*, notions of nothing. It is much neglected principle of metaphysics that nothing which is actual can be utterly impossible, no matter how fantastic in the light of certain prepossessions of our own it may present itself as being; and it is accordingly the business of philosophers (this was sometimes a platitude—it has become a paradox) to modify their notions in order to make them "fit the facts," instead of building out the facts into some correspondence with preconceptions of their own, and showing how, upon certain suppositions which covertly derive all their plausibility from the very notions and principles at issue, it is still not quite impossible that things are in general, or in the main at least, as the impeccable philosopher even in his metaphysical nonage had supposed them to be. Considering the disrepute into which the argument from design has justly fallen, it might have been expected to become by this time a dialectic commonplace that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as an essential implication; that seemingly the most intrinsically significant of things taken in absolute isolation is bare with metaphysical completeness of implication; that except upon certain presuppositions and principles of interpretation no implication can exist, and *a fortiori*, (if there can be a degree of negativity

beyond a negation already perfect), no necessary implication; that at the first step in matters metaphysical, in which all principles and presuppositions are as such in question, to speak of implications at all is to afford a notable example of *ὑστερον πρότερον*—in especial to speak, in reference to an intelligence that can command no necessarily binding discursive logic, of necessary logical implications. If it be suggested that in the absence of a binding discursive logic the foregoing objection is itself of no avail, the reply is that the former part of that objection is good in logic if there is a logic, and that, if there is not a logic, then both the former and the latter parts are good in what alone is left for an argument to be good in—in “psychologic.” Nay, if the theorist professing rationally to transcend the Specious Present claims that there is a competent logic, he but sets in a clear light the demands that his own reasoning fails conspicuously to fulfill; and if he urges that the argument to show the incompetence of logic depends on the competence of logic for its conclusiveness, he but makes out a case for scepticism, and scepticism is fatal to his position; and if he urges that, since there is no competent logic that can be appealed to, the objections to his position are not final, he does indeed deprive those objections of their conclusiveness, but he deprives also at the same instant his own doctrine of its being. The nec-

essary logical implications of the Specious Present!—say rather *in matters metaphysical* the necessarily illogical implications! “The plain fact is—is it not?—that in his effort to sever the Specious Present from all necessary connections with anything beyond itself the sceptic has inadvertently destroyed its inner unity!”—The plain fact is—is it not?—that the sceptic of the Specious Present (what a deceptive appellation after all for one who pointedly declares the Specious Present at least to be known with a certainty beyond the reach of scepticism!) and the transcendentalist alike start with a certain datum which the transcendentalist undertakes, by the instrumentality of an uncoercive logic operating in a presuppositionless premiseless void, to force the said sceptic necessarily in logic to transcend!” In the interests of a fantastic intellectual economy the sceptic has denied his epistemology the necessities of experience”—has denied the conditions which alone make knowledge or experience possible!—But an inquiry into what sort of knowledge and experience are actual is prior in logic, in whatever sense there may be a logic, to any investigation into how such knowledge or experience can be possible; and the latter investigation can employ no principles that are not supplied it by the former; and the former supplies it with just none at all, and with just none at all it can

in reason move not one step. It cannot even state the difficulty that it aims to dispose of: it cannot even show that any such difficulty, or that any difficulty, exists; the very question how such knowledge and experience as are actual can be possible proceeds upon the simply monstrous assumptions, that at least *such* knowledge and experience are not or rather cannot be self-existent, self-sufficient, self-complete; that they call for—nay that they (or anything else!) permit of—explanation; that they (or anything else!) may be, nay are, conditioned: assumptions which in any metaphysics not confessedly a half-hearted criticism of final premises in the interests of some irrevocable foregone conclusion clamour to be justified somewhat otherwise than by faith alone, assumptions that owe the whole of their facile persuasiveness to notions we all of us picked up we know not when or how before we left the nursery, that it may well be (the sceptic does not say it is) the prime business of philosophy to disabuse us of, and that every instant's consideration of the question what sort of knowledge and experience are actual, tends to render more and more untrustworthy,—that is to say, in metaphysics, more and more “impossible.” It is only in the art of fiction that a *πρῶτον ψεύδος* is allowed an unquestioned authority such as no subsequent departure from the truth, or for that matter

subsequent veracity, may permissibly lay claim to; it is only in the art of fiction that it is compulsory *ψευδῇ λέγειν ὥς δεῖ*—to bend everything to the lie one started with and steadily to prefer impossible plausibilities to implausible certainties.

Unity the Specious Present, if you insist, admittedly does possess; but unity of the specific kind alone, whatever that may be, which it presents itself as possessing—which may upon inspection be discovered in it: of unity at all indeed, unless (look after your definitions and your facts will look after themselves!) we have taken the strategic precaution once for all to define our terms before proceeding to any exact scrutiny of the matters they denote, we know by the very nature of our undertaking simply nothing, save that it is a superficially identifiable somewhat that the Specious Present has. (1) If the unity of the Specious Present is, as seemingly it is, a unity of elements intrinsically not loose nor separate nor separable nor in the chemical or physical sense component—if it is the unity of what psychologists would call a simple indivisible psychosis diversified in detail—then the intrusion of a unifying “agent” among those elements is gratuitous, if not downright disruptive: he can at the utmost establish among those elements no closer unity than they intrinsically possess; and to become in addition himself

identical with them, without ceasing to be different from them and the condition of them, and yet to remain intelligible, he will assuredly need all the omnipotence that definition can invest him with.

(2) If the unity of the Specious Present were (and though seemingly it is not there is difficulty in conceiving any *a priori* sufficient reason why it might not have been) such a unity as that, for example, of a whist party or of a body politic or of the so-called physical universe is commonly supposed to be: a unity, namely, of elements conceivably at least transferable from one organic whole to another, and at least to that extent intrinsically loose and separate, and (though not perhaps without loss or alteration) separable, with nothing "between" them, not even a figment of the imagination, "to hold them together"—or to keep them apart!—then:¹

(i) To offer proof that in any event *such* elements could not of themselves possess, or at the least could not account for, the unity that on this hypothesis they would present themselves as possessing, would be little better than a joke. It would lightly imply among other things a pre-established certainly (*a*) that there are things susceptible of being accounted for—it may be

¹ I must ask the reader to distinguish sharply for the moment between the characteristics in such a unity which might be "given," and the characteristics which must at best be inferred only.

wondered in what sense?—(*b*) that there are things even which need to be accounted for; (*c*) that (paradoxical symmetry!) the things capable of accounting for them exist: it would lightly imply also the existence of (*d*) a pre-established standard of what sort of things can, or at least may, be accounted for, and (*e*) a pre-established standard of what sort of things suffice to account for them; and the existence of an already accredited means of applying these standards—that is to say, (*f*) an already accredited means of identifying a given instance as a case of *a* or *b*, and (*g*) an already accredited means of identifying an account offered as a case of *c*, (the same device might of course serve for both *f* and *g*—or might not); and (*h*) a previously finished showing that those means are capable of being employed by a merely human intelligence.

(ii) What we should know, on the hypothesis supposed, of *such* elements, would be simply that they are elements *such* as precisely do possess the unity that the Specious Present has. There would be no other group of elements of the "same" kind that we are better acquainted with, or indeed equally acquainted with, or indeed acquainted with at all, to which we might appeal for a more accurate knowledge of what sort of unity such elements—or any elements!—may or may not of themselves possess; and even if there were, it would not follow that whatever is true of

one set of elements must of "logical," necessity be true of a numerically different set that upon a merely superficial view has seemed sufficiently like the first to be provisionally or precipitately classified as of the same kind; and even if this did of "logical" necessity follow, it would be a departure from the transcendental method—it is the sceptic's thesis that the transcendental method is covertly made up of such departures—in this connection to rely on it. To attempt to show that *such* elements could not possess what they admittedly possess would be to succeed in self-contradiction; and to argue that *mere* togetherness is not unity would betray a certain susceptibility to *petitio principii*—would manifest so finished a neatness in its use as to have taken in by means of it first of all one's self; and to offer to cite instances, for example, of one idea in one mind or moment of consciousness, and of a second idea in a second mind or moment of consciousness, as instances of "elements" which *may* be "together" (in a different sense, by the way—but no matter) without thereby "constituting" a "higher" unity that includes them both, would be to overlook among many other things the damaging fact that the very existence of such instances, and of "other" minds and moments of consciousness, is among the matters in dispute, and must remain in dispute until after the settlement of the very question

those instances would be referred to as deciding.

(iii) To add to such elements an agent which should introduce amongst them no closer unity than they of themselves possess would be once more gratuitous, if not downright disruptive; and to add to them an agent which should introduce amongst them a closer unity than they of themselves possess would be to provide for them a closer unity than on that hypothesis the Specious Present has.

(3) For a relation to be real would seem to require no more than the reality of the related terms: if there are minds ejective to one another and to all other minds, if other minds there be, then since even to be different or distinct or separate or plural is to be related, it seems a contradiction in terms to deny that relations between such minds exist. For a relation to be known, immediately of course, seems to require that the relation and the related terms be given as distinguishable inseparable details in one indivisible psychosis or "passing moment" of consciousness; if to know a relation between two things, and to know those two things as related, are different ways of phrasing the same statement, it seems to be a self-contradiction to affirm that the terms of the relation known may be in minds or moments of consciousness ejective to each other, or that relations between minds or moments of conscious-

ness ejective to one another, if such there be, may be immediately known. The specific unity in diversity that the Specious Present has, (the appeal is to introspection,) is the unity in diversity that is of the essence of an immediate consciousness of relations. For x and y to be known is for x and y to exist; for x and y to be known as related is for x and y to exist in the same moment of consciousness—to exist as distinguishable elements in one psychic whole; for x and y to be known, but not known as related, is for x and y to exist in moments of consciousness ejective to each other.² To ask what then breaks down the barrier between x and y —what cognizes them as related?—is by the very form of the question to assume (a) that the identical x and y cognized as related have existed in ununited isolation before they were cognized as related that the x and y cognized as related are in effect intrinsically separable and loose; and (b) that to be cognized, is to be cognized *by* something—that the unity belonging to a cognition of relation is a unity of intrinsically repellent mental particles held together by something different from themselves: and both assumptions—need it at this late day be said?—are gratuitous, almost grotesque. *Wo der Verstand vorher nichts verbunden*

² The reader will of course bear in mind in testing this affirmation the familiar observations and experiments in "split-off" consciousness.

hat, da kann er auch nichts auflösen: if you choose in sheer violence to take for granted that a combination has been affected, it would indeed evince a mistimed scrupulosity to hesitate about asserting that the combination has been effected by an abracadabra, or a hippogriff, or *par excellence* an agent, or what you will. The plain fact is, that what is given is x and y cognized as related; that things numerically different cannot, however similar otherwise, be metaphysically identical; that since a mental state is what it is known to be, a mental state differently known is a different mental state; that an existing mental x and y , cognized as distinguishable inseparable details of one indivisible psychosis, cannot without self-contradiction be affirmed to be the "same" as a non-existent x and y , formerly, if at all, constituting mutually ejective bits of consciousness not so cognized; that it is a signal example of the "psychologist's fallacy" to confuse a mental x and y related, but not known to be related, as bits of consciousness ejective to each other, with an x and y related and known to be related as bits of consciousness not ejective to each other; and that if x and y are really ejective bits of consciousness, the agent by which they are—miraculous achievement!—to be "combined" without losing their identity (or remaining the same!) into precisely what they were not, details in a metaphysical unity, must be either identical with them, or something

ejective to them; and in the first case that agent is by hypothesis a mere collective name for the disunited particulars to be "combined;" and in the second case, that agent is merely an additional unattached particular; and in both cases, it is an enigmatic somewhat, magnificently charged with the performance of an operation that escapes proving unintelligible so long only as no attempt is made to understand it. The sceptic has been too severely disciplined in the etiquette of the transcendental court to insist on being presented to this agent—this agent has always just stepped out and left a sense of agility, or the pronoun I, to give audience in his stead. And it must never for an instant be forgotten that this agent is not anything real, nor subject himself to be categorized, and cannot therefore be literally single, nor operative, nor unifying; and cannot distinguish himself from things, nor present them to himself,—except possibly in a transcendental acceptance; and can neither be conceived nor spoken of except falsely—it being so much better to conceive and speak of him falsely (we may, it seems, be sure at least of that!) than not at all.

If, however, our concern in metaphysics is not primarily to discover what, rightly or wrongly, by implication or explicitly, we do actually believe; nor even what beliefs for all practical purposes we act on and are no doubt determined to continue acting on; but which, if any, of our

beliefs we hold on grounds that exclude at least, every obvious possibility of mistake; then a certain deference to the meaning attached to words by the "collective intelligence," and to "Locke's little book," and to the syllogistic logic and its professors from century to century, is, so long as no conclusion distinctively metaphysical is based on that deference, perfectly consistent with a scepticism in metaphysics of the most uncompromising kind; the absurdity of attempting to found an objection on such a deference is so pervasive as almost to infect any effort to expose it. If the phrase, "to grant simply for the purpose of argument," can mean what it says, if we may, without yielding an atom of assent to a body of doctrine, follow out its logical consequences and pronounce what is consistent with it and what not, we may in unviolated ignorance of anything beyond the Specious Present, or even in irremediable mistake in regard to everything beyond the Specious Present—even to the length of supposing that there is something, anything, beyond the Specious Present to be mistaken "about"—be shocked at the bare suggestion that "the future" can be contemporaneous with "the past," or that "the future" has existed, or that "the past" will exist, or that either "the future" or "the past" do exist, or that "they" are not two but one; we may without in metaphysical certainty knowing anything, even the existence, of

any mind other than "our own," and without knowing more of "our own" indeed than the "passing moment," distinguish with a certain neatness of limitation between what we know with metaphysical certainty, and what we simply conjecture, about "our mind" and any suppositious mind other than our own, and between "the" passing moment and suppositious moments passed or to be passed; and may know that, if a mental state exists only when and in so far as it is perceived, then when it has ceased to be felt it has ceased to be, and that if by the future and the past we mean what the words say, "other" minds cannot know the future and the past otherwise than we do without knowing them as by definition they are not, and cannot, in the only sense we can attach to the words "immediate knowledge," know our mind immediately without by that fact becoming one with it and being known by us. If a relation, and the related terms, and the consciousness of that relation, are four things possessing no unity with one another, then the knowledge achieved by the "agent" or "principle" which "presents them to itself," and "distinguishes itself from them," must be either immediate in the sense that the agent knowledge is directly constituted by them, that that agent's knowledge of them and their knowledge of themselves are one, or in some sense mediate—in the sense, if we are to take seriously the word "to present" (as of course we

are not), that the agent or principle stands over against them in their invincible multiplicity and takes, in the unity of its own essence, a total impression: but to know them immediately, would be to know them disunitedly; if the agent's knowledge is constituted by them, is wholly or in part made up of them, no holding *them* together, nor gumming them together, nor connecting them at the edges or elsewhere, can give them a unity other than that of a mixture, or mosaic, or web, or psychic crystal of perdurable atoms of mind-stuff: and to know them mediately would be not at all to know *them* but to know somewhat else that "knows" them; and in what sense the agent can know that somewhat, and can know it knows, and know that somewhat knows, and what that somewhat knows, and in what sense if at all it really does that somewhat know, are matters involving in an aggravated form the difficulty with which we set out; nor can it be readily conceived in what that somewhat itself should consist except in a cognition of relations, to be resolved in turn into a relation, and related terms and consciousness of relation, in disunion. If the first of a succession of thoughts ceases to exist before the second comes into being, and the second ceases to exist before the third comes into being, and so on, then the knowledge achieved by an agent or principle which presents the succession to itself cannot be immediate in the sense that the successive

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thoughts are in whole or in part the stuff which is worked up into that knowledge; by hypothesis no two of the successive thoughts are in existence at once to be worked up together, and by the time the succession is complete and a knowledge of it possible the last thought only of the succession exists. And that knowledge cannot by way of total impression be even at one remove mediate; directly from the succession itself no total impression can be taken; the whole number of its parts at no one time exist; there can at the utmost, (to say that the agent is timeless is not to say that it is of all times, still less that it is of all times at once; it is to say that it is of no time whatever! and in any event the object of knowledge in is time even if the knower is not), be taken now an impression of one part of the succession, and now of another part, and now of another, and so on, and finally a total impression of these impressions; and there is no unity amongst the successive thoughts, and no unity between the successive thoughts and the partial impressions, and no unity amongst the partial impressions, and no unity between the partial impressions and the total impression, and no unity (unity of impression being a cognition of relation) in the total impression itself, nor between the total impression and the agent which presents it to itself! "In order that successive feelings may be related objects of experience, there must be in consciousness an agent which

distinguishes itself from the feelings, uniting them in their severalty, making them equally present in their succession—the unity of this principle must be correlative to the unity of the experience;"¹ the unity of this principle indeed is the golden thread on which the pretty beads are strung! Really the contemners of metaphysics have in even the sceptic's eyes some reason on their side—it is the proverbial last ditch in which embattled ideas die. It seems, for some reason too delicate to bear the light, to be supposed that if a thing has existed in the past, more of it than would otherwise exist must be in existence now: if the present agent is identical with the past agent, all of that agent that has existed (is that the argument?) does exist, and any knowledge that was immediate is immediate. But without questioning the timelessness of the agent and the similarity of its relation to present knowledge and to past, it is clear that on the hypothesis of a knowing agent no knowledge ever was or is immediate; the agent brings to the problem of immediate knowledge in the present or the past greater difficulties than those it is invoked to solve; and even if it did not, to be the same some-what or no-what that presented, or presents, (though the past in time is by definition gone), the past to itself is one thing, and to know that one is such a somewhat is another, and to know

the past that that somewhat presented or presents to itself is a third; and from the unity of the somewhat no unity can be inferred between the knowledge and the somewhat, still less between the knowledge and the past which that somewhat presented or presents to itself; the knower's past-and-present self and the knower's past knowledge are as little a part of the knower's present consciousness as are the past-and-present self and past knowledge of some other knower, if other knower there be; to be put into immediate possession of another knower's past would involve bridging over no more unmistakable a chasm than to be put into immediate possession of one's own. The agent's agency is rendered conceivable and plausible only by language covertly suggesting "physical" analogies that upon examination are found not to be serviceable, and that even if serviceable could not, except unavowedly, be employed; the agent's singleness is incommunicable, and the agent's self is a fictitious no-what summoned by a paralogism to fill a non-existent gap in consciousness. Unless it be of a succession of thoughts—and that too of loose and separate thoughts—that one is thinking, it simply does not follow, from the fact that a thought and the object of that thought must be one, that the thought of a succession is a disconnected succession of thoughts, a succession of loose and separate, or ejective, thoughts. And to say that

there is unity in the Specious Present is to say that the entire Specious Present is one thought; that the relations it cognizes—the successions, successive phrases of "change," similarities, co-existences, dispositions to the right and left, motions, what you will—are not relations between loose and separate thoughts or bits of consciousness, but relations between unsevered distinguishable details of itself; to think of a relation of loose and separate thoughts would require one to think of the relation of one's Specious Present to something beyond it, and the words so stubbornly oppose themselves to the effort to make sense of them one may well be at a loss how to begin; the statement that the thought of a succession of loose and separate thoughts would be a succession of loose and separate thoughts and therefore not a thought at all but a contradiction in terms, may be taken as a perfect exposition of the doctrine that nothing beyond the Specious Present can be known. The absurdity of trying to put the idealist landscape into the crudely realist head has been commented on already: when Mill characterized the "mind" as a series of states of consciousness aware of itself as a series, he committed obviously the parallel absurdity of trying to put the Specious Present into the idealist head. But the idealist head, and whatever vision there may be of its special history, are details in the Specious Present; and Mill's doctrine, plainly

stated, would run, that the Specious Present contains among other things a belief that it (the Specious Present!) is a unit in a certain series of its own details.

3.

As for finding oneself obliged by the suggested redefinition of truth to revert to the belief of the crude realist, the answer needs must vary with the sense to be put upon belief "in an external universe that depends not on our perception, but would exist though we and every sensible creature were absent or annihilated." (1.) If the belief meant is that the idealist "landscape" is "external" to the idealistic head; and that the idealistic landscape and the idealistic body and head are, as compared with the "contents" of the idealist head (if some small matter of emotions, volitions, and "unobjectified" feelings generally, may permissibly be so called), relatively stable, and peculiarly apt, because in so many cases "recoverable" upon a mere "readjustment of the sense organs" and (seemingly at least) "stable enough for all practical purposes," to be laxly described as more stable than they really are; and that the idealist head and body, and the idealist heads and bodies of "one's fellow creatures," are but "ephemeral" details in one's vision of the universe: then belief is a feeble term

for immediate certainty; and it is idle to talk of "reverting to" what has never for an instant been departed from. (2.) If the belief meant is, that the idealist head and body and the rest of the entire idealist vision of the universe are inside a "material" head, which is a sort of fac-simile in a different stuff of the idealist head; and that there are "material" fac-similes of so much at least of the vision of the universe as is "regarded as" present, which bear to the material head relations corresponding to those borne by the idealistic landscape to the idealist head: then he who uses this extraordinary verbiage may fairly be requested to transmute it, with a full sense of the spatial absurdities it involves, into its equivalent in thought; and if he finds the feat impossible, or even difficult, or even unaccustomed,—if he finds that when he attempts it he inevitably dwarfs the idealist landscape, or inflates the material head, or conceives the material head simply as a sort of ghostly double of the idealist head and does not trouble himself to put the idealist landscape *into* the material head at all, or does trouble himself and does not succeed, or is in any event simply running a line of division through his vision of the universe and saying to himself, however inadvertently, "So much of my vision of the universe shall be called 'my entire vision' of the universe, and the remainder shall be called the 'material' head in which it lodges, and

the material universe,"—then he may be challenged to admit that in *that* sense at least a belief in an external world is not at all inevitable or common, and that the proposition vulgarly confounded with it, "that it is only by the senses we communicate with the outer world", is either transmuted into thought in idealist terms, or not transmuted into thought at all, or (what in all but quite exceptional instances is probably the case) but partially transmuted. (3.) If the belief meant is that the "contents of the idealist head" (the small matter of emotions, volitions, and unobjectified feelings already mentioned above) are of one kind of stuff, specifically to be denominated mental, and are only what they are felt to be and when they are felt, and all the rest—other "minds" excepted—of one's universe as "known," including one's own body and head, are of a different, relatively permanent, kind of stuff specifically to be denominated material, and are what they are whether they are "felt" or not, (and sometimes even are something different from what they are felt to be!): then the reply is, that, the instant the question is understood, so much of one's vision of the world as is "historical," as has relation to the past or future, will be by everyone admitted to be distinctly mental; and that upon a steady scrutiny much of what is at first perhaps regarded as "present," as "given," is recognized as of the same stuff as what is historical, as in effect

inferential or reminiscent, and what is inferential or reminiscent is mental; and that the rest is sensation, and sensation is mental; and that the whole doctrine is an instance of taking seriously ellipses and simplifications found as a rule sufficient or even advantageous for practical purposes; and of insisting that the technical terms appropriate to those simplifications should be retained in formulating the complete total which, if taken absolutely, they falsify; and of refusing to attend, when attention to them is essential, to details habitually slighted in a mere summary breadth of view and statement, though never except in statement quite ignored. It was a part of what the sceptic recognises as Hume's incorrigible levity to call this sort of exposition "reasoning," and to imply that it could be in anywise infected by the uncertainty attaching to the processes of inference, and to hint that its hold on the "mind" is unstable, as if it were some audacious ratiocinative paradox; the matter is one simply of steady attention, of unflinching inspection, of unyielding determination to make one's word embody what is "before one's eyes"—and "behind" them; psychological analysis is less in the nature of a discovery of anything really new, or even unfamiliar, than of the correction of an habitual inadvertence. Berkeley's achievement and Hume's were descriptive, or at the utmost discriminative, simply; and possess as great

constancy and "hold" on the "mind" as any other nice distinction, or indeed as any other distinction whatever nice or not. One does not keep reiterating to one's self without intermission that two and two are four, or that the sum of the interior angles of a triangle equals two right angles, or (to come to instances in point of immediacy and certainty more pertinent) that one is experiencing such and such "bodily" sensations, or that the centre of the "field of vision" is more distinct than the neighbourhood of the circumference, or any other truth that may or may not be regarded as having come to us "in the first instance" with a shock of mingled familiarity and surprise; these cognitions are stable in the precise way and in no other in which the cognition of the "external" world as mental is stable—they are adverted to on occasions when they are pertinent, simply, and any ratiocinative construction that may conflict with them shatters itself against them. To characterise them on these various accounts as possessing an intermittent hold on the mind, or merely throwing one into a momentary amazement and confusion, would be recognised at once as a perverse or perversely humorous misstatement. And answers to the like effect are to be made in regard to memory and in regard to inferences relating to times other than the present. If by belief in memory and in such inferences is meant simply belief that one's

cognition of the "present" state of the "external" world and of the "present" state of one's "body" and "head" and "feelings" form but a part of one's vision of the universe; that antecedent and subsequent "states" both of the universe and of one's bodily and feeling self make up a great part of that vision—that the present is built out *a parte ante* and *a parte post* by an ideal construction: then again belief is a feeble term for what is immediately certain; the credibility of memory and inference in that sense is not and has not been called in question. But if by belief in memory and in such inferences is meant belief that one's entire vision of the universe as it is, as it has been, as it will be, constitutes one complete moment of one's consciousness, and falls as a whole within the temporal unity of that particular one of its own parts which is distinctively regarded as the present state of one's feeling self, or at the utmost of one's "perceptive" self; and that corresponding to each of the "memories of past states," or "expectations of future states," of one's physical and feeling and "perceptive" self in that moment, one supposes there have been or will be other moments bearing to that moment such relations as the content of the respective memories and expectations to which they severally correspond bear to the content of the cognition of the present state of one's physical and feeling and perceptive self: then again he who uses this

extraordinary verbiage may fairly be requested to transmute it with a full sense of the temporal absurdities it involves, into its equivalent in thought; and if he finds the feat impossible, or even difficult, or even unaccustomed—if he finds that when he attempts it he simply imagines a microscopic inaccurate copy of the “complete moment,” and introduces it by main force into the contents of the present state of the feeling self, or simply ignores the limits of the present state of the feeling self, or first conceives a double time series and mentally denominates one of them the complete present moment and the other the original which in part represents it,—then again he may be challenged to admit concerning such a belief in memory and expectation, that if the plain man does not go in search of it, it will not come in search of the plain man. And if by belief in memory and in such inferences is meant belief that the past as known by memory and the future as known by expectation differ, one or both of them, from the present as known, not in stuff nor mode of existence, but simply in position in a series: then the answer is that the language of the muses indeed recognises no such difference; but that, unless perhaps the somewhat apocryphal Melete is to be so accounted, there has been no muse of metaphysics; and that in any event the plain man, in spite of language and the muses, shows himself perfectly aware,

whenever there is any point in his taking cognizance of that difference, that it exists; that what he calls the future and the past *are* really only present “make-believe”, marked off in mode of existence and essential stuff from present “reality,” and separable from the most distinctively capricious vagaries of the imagination at first sight by nothing more than a certain pertinacity and spontaneity.

CHAPTER VI

THE TESTIMONY OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

I.

MUST it be concluded then—because the sceptic has reduced the question to sheer nonsense!—that we can know nothing but the Specious Present?—or, avoiding modestly the assumption of omniscience involved in an assertion about potentiality, that simply we do know nothing but the Specious Present?—or, avoiding the responsibilities of a denial, that we know the Specious Present and in Mr. Bradley's phrase are waiting, and are under the impression that we have for years been waiting, to be shown that there is more to be known, and, even if so, that we may obtain access to it? The case is rather—shall it not be said?—that the sceptic's argument, like the argument in Humean writings generally, is in effect a *reductio ad absurdum* of a certain theory of knowledge. It addresses itself not so much to conviction as to hilarity, and demands less that we assent to its conclusion than that we abandon its premises. If

anybody chooses to affirm that he does assent to its conclusion—that it is as possible to believe simply, completely, in the metaphysics of the Specious Present as in any form for example of Kantianism, there might indeed be difficulty in gainsaying him: it would be but too evident that a belief in Kantianism or in any of the more paradoxical philosophies must be of the same kind. Such philosophies are jokes in everything but intelligibility and comic intention; they are witticisms still-born, *jeux d'esprit* in need of a learned commentary. The eminence in metaphysics of the scepticism of the Specious Present lies in the fact that it does not very obstinately insist on being taken for what it is not, and that it directs us to the commentary of which it and its compeers stand in need.

"The general character of this system," Ferrier wrote, with admirable explicitness, of his *Institutes*, "is that it is a body of necessary truth. It starts from a simple proposition which, it is conceived, is an essential axiom of all reason, and one which cannot be denied without running against a contradiction. From this single proposition the system is deduced in a series of demonstrations, each of which professes to be as strict as any demonstration in Euclid, while the whole of them taken together constitute one great demonstration. If this rigorous necessity is not their character to the very letter—if there is a weak point in the

system—if there be any one premise or any one conclusion which is not as certain as that two and two make four, the whole scheme falls to pieces, and must be given up, root and branch. Everything is periled on the pretension that the scheme is rigidly demonstrated throughout; for a philosophy is not entitled to exist, unless it can make good this claim. As for the charge that philosophy has borrowed the method of mathematics, it would be truer to say that mathematics, being a less profound science, and therefore susceptible of a much earlier maturity, have stolen, by anticipation, the proper method of philosophy. It is rather too much that one narrow section of human thought should be allowed to monopolize the whole, and only, method of universal truth." Well! Ferrier's *Institutes* do not properly speaking exist, and the notion that one can start from a single axiom, or even from a multitude of axioms, and leave unjustified one's method of procedure, well may move our mirth to-day; but from the time at least of Plato with his ready scorn for the ἀγέωμετρητος till the time of Kant, that alone has been regarded as worthy of the name of knowledge in philosophical strictness so-called, which was either in its own right self-evident beyond any possibility of mistake, or deduced by a process that excluded any possibility of mistake from somewhat else in its own right self-evident; and the effort of Kant and his successors, in so far as it has not been

"sceptical," has been simply to supply a deficiency in the earlier conception of the means by which that ideal of knowledge was to be attained—to show, still by a process that excluded any possibility of mistake, that the things in which we necessarily believe are necessarily what we believe them to be. The sum, when all is said, of the contention against "reasoning from particulars to particulars," against "inductive" logic, against empiricism as a theory of knowledge, is simply that they do not guarantee certainty; that if the account they give of knowledge is the true account, knowledge "worthy of the name" does not exist, science is an audacious surmise, its repeated confirmation by the fact is a continued mystery, and the human intelligence on intimate acquaintance proves to be incapable of understanding either itself or anything else, even the conditions which make it "possible," even its own incapacity. The secret of the perennial charm of systems of "rationalism" for certain minds—what alone prevents the literally grotesque flattery in the portrait of the "mind" which rationalism of any kind is pledged in honour to present from instantly appealing to men's sense of humour or disgust—is the traditional conception brought to the study of epistemology of what knowledge by definition is, the traditional uncritical uncriticised presumption that he who is neither a rationalist nor a sceptic must be a person simply who does not

"speak the language." There are, in brief, three distinguishable modes of intelligence—intuition, memory, and inference; of these three intuition alone is of unblemished authority, and has for some centuries therefore been accepted as supplying a standard of perfection for the other two. Intuition has been employed to criticise on the basis of its own distinctive excellence the products of the other two—that is the *rationale* at once of every sceptical argument (falsely so-called) known to the history of philosophy, and of the conclusiveness of such arguments, and of the frivolity of any effort to ignore them or prove them self-destructive, and of the insufficiency of any effort to reply to them, and of the metaphysics of the Specious Present. Memory and inference have by tacit consent been required to operate with the lucidity, the distinctness, the exclusion of all possibility of mistake, which intuition at its best displays; and in so far as they have been supposed to meet this requirement, they have been regarded as affording knowledge in strictness so called, and in so far as they have been supposed to fail to meet it, they have been regarded as affording mere opinion. Of memory, on this hypothesis, the less that was said the better; and philosophers are to be complimented on their discretion. With inference the case has been imagined to be different. On the ground of a mistaken estimate of the sort and degree of certainty achieved in geometry and in

mathematics generally, and of the security of the progress from premises to conclusion in the syllogism and in such other modes of argumentation as might be found "conclusive in form," it has been fancied that in certain cases at least, which it was the business of logicians precisely to define, inference could be made to do in essentials the work of intuition; and it has been the special function of metaphysics to take heed that in any event in the all-important cases inference should be made actually to do so: precisely what has been intended by metaphysical or logical certitude is just that—the certitude of an intuition, a certitude comparable in degree to that of intuition. But such certitude is to all appearance the exclusive prerogative of immediate knowledge; the supposition in regard to inference would seem to be a delusion founded on a primitive psychology and an uncritical logic; constructive metaphysics was by the inherent falsity or frivolity of the very definitions with which it set out committed to the futility that it is justly credited with having in all ages achieved. *Gli uomini sono miseri per necessità e risoluti di credersi miseri per accidente*: men are fallible of necessity—metaphysicians have resolved to believe them fallible by chance. Unless the law of causation and generally the final premises of knowledge can be justified to the point of an essentially intuitive certitude, metaphysicians decline to feel comfortable: some por-

tion of their "whole nature" is dissatisfied. They might as profitably, as rationally, as significantly, decline to feel comfortable so long as the physical proportions of men and women fall short of those of the Phidian Zeus and the Melian Venus. The one thing plainer than another about the human intelligence is, that in all its operations it is groping, fumbling, tentative, insecure, certain (if at all) *ex post facto*; that it is incompetent to deal adequately with the simplest material presented to it; that its successes are but strokes of luck and its failures the fit expression of its powers; that its conclusive demonstrations and clever dialectic are tricks of statement, tricks of style, tricks of literary toilet, rhetorical powder, patches, paint and rouge. He who asserts that to admit this frankly is to do what in one lies to degrade the dignity of the mind, must be prepared to maintain that the dignity of the mind is heightened by its openly affecting to be what patently it is not. And unless the meaning of words is a matter of capricious definition simply and not a matter in the last resort of the analysis of something signified, logical certainty is such certainty and such certainty only, whatever that may be, as logic is able to supply, and knowledge is such knowledge and such knowledge only, with all its blemishes, as we possess. A man knows some portion of his own past by memory; knows some portion of the past, some portion of the pro-

blematical present and the future, some portion of the hypothetical present, past, and future, of himself and other people, by inference; and knows by intuition his own Specious Present: if in deference to a sentiment of discomfort, if in deference to what in the extinction of his sense of humour he need not perhaps refrain from calling the demands of his "whole nature," he chooses to restrict the word knowledge to such knowledge only as is of intuitive certitude, then on that definition he knows nothing but the Specious Present, his own Specious Present; but the solipsism and the scepticism contained in that doctrine are purely verbal, and belong whether he acknowledge them or not to the person who accepts that definition, which the plain man may not unreasonably reject. There are three distinguishable sorts of knowledge, simply, corresponding to three distinguishable modes of the intelligence, and they are of varying degrees of certitude.

2.

Vicerunt empirici, cries the psychological idealist: the victory lies with the empiricists, and in particular with psychological idealists of the type of John Stuart Mill. More pretentious philosophers propound problems that they cannot in fairness raise, and offer solutions of them that they cannot verify. They assume that human

knowledge is other than it is, only in order to argue that there would have to be presupposed certain other non-existent things to make such knowledge possible; and that argument itself, even as a logical construction on hypothetical premises, is found on critical examination to be unsound. They take for granted an unreal somewhat only in order to explain it afterward on the supposition of certain fictitious conditions, and the explanation is a paralogism. The psychological idealist alone starts under no misconception of the facts, raises no questions that are in their nature futile, makes no demand on any power of the intelligence for a display of qualities exclusively pertaining to one of the other powers, employs intuition whenever intuition can be employed, and memory and inference whenever in default of intuition memory and inference must be employed, and neither ascribes to memory and inference nor endeavours to exact of them the sort of security that belongs to intuition only, and neither repines at the limitations of his instrument nor imagines that if he did repine those limitations would disappear. About the present fact *qua* present, and about its secret essence, its inner nature, he has no doubt: it is mental, it is single, it is "subjective;" it has properly speaking no secret essence, no inner nature, it is known through and through, it is and is only what it is conscious of being—to deny that or any part of

that is to commit a contradiction in terms; and to say, not that it is what it is conscious of itself as being, but that it is what the mind which takes cognisance of it is conscious of it as being, is to have a care for idiom and to be careless of fact. The psychological idealist does not ask what a consciousness such as that implies; how it can have come about; under what conditions it is possible; least of all, under what conditions only it is possible: he is too keenly aware that to ask a question is indirectly to make an assertion, perhaps a multitude of assertions; and that the assertions on which the questions mentioned are based are such as he is utterly unable to justify or even to make intelligible. The psychological idealist believes on the warrant of memory that his present consciousness is a "moment" in a "stream of consciousness;" he believes on the warrant of inference that there are streams of consciousness other than "his own;" but he recognises the insecurity attaching to such beliefs, and, unversed in the satisfactions to be found in explanations of the ultimate by the unmeaning, does not seek to account for what is mental by what is non-mental, nor to convince himself that in some way sufficiently mysterious what is mental would be deprived of the disconnectedness and multiplicity it really possesses, if only there could be shown to be a transcendental somewhat else possessing unity. Having a relish for words

to which some signification may be ascribed, the psychological idealist confines his remarks to emotions, volitions, ideas, sensations and permanent possibilities of sensation—his own and other people's.

"Permanent possibilities of sensation"—and that with a relish for words to which some significance may be ascribed!—the hostile critic, as the psychological idealist well knows, is certain to exclaim. And there has indeed come to be something almost comic about the phrase "permanent possibilities of sensation:" the grotesqueness of certain misinterpretations and comments due to misinterpretations has a little rubbed off on it. It might therefore with advantage be discarded, but for the sheer impossibility of discovering a substitute that shall so precisely and plainly define the element of truth, the element that abides triumphant in the face of criticism, in the psychological idealist's account of belief in an external world. The difficulty commonly felt in regard to it has often been formulated, and by nobody perhaps more neatly than by Professor Andrew Seth. After quoting Mill's statement that the modifications in our possibilities of sensation are "quite independent of our consciousness and of our presence or absence,"—that "whether we are asleep or awake the fire goes out and puts an end to that particular possibility of warmth and light," and "whether we

are present or absent the corn ripens and brings a new possibility of food;" Professor Seth says: "We may fairly ask how a change can take place in a possibility at a time when it does not exist. 'A change in nothing,' as Mr. Stout puts it, 'is no change at all.' Equally baseless is the notion of one of these possibilities causally modifying another at a time when, *exhypothesi* both are non-existent. The truth is that under cover of the ambiguous word 'possibility,' Mill has covertly re-introduced the 'trans-subjective reality.'" The truth is in other words, according to Professor Seth, (since Mill's denial of any such re-introduction is explicit), that on a consistent interpretation of subjective idealism Mill's statements possess and can possess no meaning, and that such significance as for him they had was unavowedly "borrowed."

To the follower of Mill it seems that Professor Seth and those who share with him the responsibility of such criticisms are fairly open to the charge of passing judgment on psychological idealism before they have understood it, and placing at the service of the psychological idealist not so much their intelligence as their courtesy: when what the psychological idealist really means forces itself upon their minds at all, they either dismiss it hastily as too fantastic to be attributed seriously to a man in his senses, they either misconstrue him out of pure good manners, crediting him in the

interest of his sanity with having felt the irresistible attraction of some proposition of their own, or else politely urge on him his very meaning as an objection to itself—as an implication that he cannot have perceived in the language he consents to employ. In especial, it would seem, they can scarcely trust their eyes when they read in the pages of a psychological idealist that he can discover no ground for believing that a change ever takes place in any strict sense *in* anything, least of all in a possibility: a change without a basis of identity, without a somewhat that is the same in the midst of change, a somewhat perdurable that, (in their phrase) changes, is to them so monstrous so obviously impossible, a conception, that they cannot bring themselves to ascribe it to a fellow mortal except in derision: whereas there is perhaps but one thing more monstrous and impossible than this doctrine as it appears in their eyes, and that is their own doctrine of change as it appears in the eyes of the psychological idealist. To the psychological idealist, the only guise in which what is denoted by the word change is discoverable or indeed conceivable is mere sequence: first one thing, and then another thing, numerically distinct and separate from the first, but closely related to it in time or in time and space. If in an unguarded moment of deference to current forms of speech, the psychological idealist seems to say that he

identifies the two as successive phases of the same thing, he must be understood to refer to his recognition of this intimate relation, simply; to his connecting the two things in his thought of them, not to his confounding them—far less to his supposing that there subsists between them an identity properly so-called. Fancy the identity of two things numerically distinct and separate!—for example, since all existence is mental, of two states of mind! When the psychological idealist speaks of a change having taken place in possibilities, he means that there was first a possibility of one thing, and then the impossibility of that and the possibility of something else, and no discernible or conceivable connection between the two, except *ex post facto* in his thought. The statement may by an adversary be regarded as false to introspection, or again it may not, but it is not unmeaning and it is not trans-subjective, at least not necessarily. And it is not lightly to be taken for granted that the psychological idealist finds his own mental attitude as difficult to maintain as his adversaries find it; there is something almost naive in an inability to recognise that the psychological idealist may find trans-subjectivism as awkward as his adversaries find subjectivism. Everybody has at some time or other believed, everybody habitually does believe, that the sun moves round the earth; even the practised astronomer might find it difficult from

hour to hour to translate the certainties of daily life into scientific terms; but the practised astronomer would find it still more difficult, assuredly, to conceive his Copernican astronomy in Ptolemaic terms; and certainly he would never do so inadvertently, would never in a desperate effort to make Copernicus intelligible steal for him a proposition from Ptolemy. When the psychological idealist is challenged to say what a possibility is, he has every right to reply that by possibility he means what everybody else means that speaks the language—a certain sort of conditional fact, a fact the conditions precedent of which do not seem to be unrealisable; his ground for asserting a conditional fact being an hypothetical judgment. His hypothetical judgment may of course be mistaken, the fact he believes to be possible may really be not possible, but his conviction is not unintelligible nor self-contradictory nor unsupported by evidence such as his opponents would not hesitate in confirmation of a belief of their own to accept. Let us take two cases. (a) The psychological idealist believes himself, let us suppose, to hold three matches in his hand; he believes that he can "strike" them all; he does "strike" one and watches it burn to ashes. A change in possibilities of sensation, he believes, has taken place, in the plain sense that, whereas he could (he remembers believing) a moment ago strike three matches, he can now, he

believes, strike but two. Instead of saying that a change in the possibilities has taken place it would be more studiously precise to say that the possibilities are changed, *i.e.*, are different, simply. (b) The psychological idealist, let us suppose, believes himself to hold three matches in his hand, believes that he can strike them all, does strike one, and shuts his eyes; presently he opens his eyes and believes himself to hold in his hand two matches and a bit of charred wood. A change in possibilities of sensation has, he believes, taken place as in the case first supposed, in the plain sense that whereas a moment ago he could, he remembers believing, strike three matches, he can now strike but two. But also a change in possibilities of sensation, he believes, was taking place from instant to instant during the time while he held his eyes shut, in the perfectly plain sense that, if he had not shut his eyes as he struck the match, he would, he believes, have had a peculiar sensation of sight, he would have seen a spurt and flare, such as he remembers seeing when other matches were struck; and that if he had opened his eyes an instant after he struck the match, he would, he believes, have had not the sensation of a flare and spurt of light, but a numerically and qualitatively different sensation,—would have seen the match beginning to burn steadily, and but beginning; and so on generally for each succeeding instant. That and that only

is what is meant by saying that whether or not the psychological idealist opens his eyes (let it be assumed for the moment for simplicity's sake that no consciousness other than that of the psychological idealist in question can take cognizance of the matches that he holds), the possibility is changing: nothing *is* changing, because nothing is in existence to change; but if the man open his eyes at one instant he gets one sort of sensation, if he opens his eyes at another instant he gets another sort of sensation, simply: so the man believes.

A change in a possibility of sensation, the psychological idealist should make haste to add by way of proof that he is not borrowing sanity from trans-subjectivism, is to all appearance a breach in the order of nature: a certain act, a certain attitude, holding open one's eyes in a certain way, is at one instant followed by one set of consequents, and at the next instant, abruptly and inexplicably, by a different and qualitatively different set. The universe is on the surface at least, according to psychological idealism, an all but utterly chaotic affair,—is not at the first glance to be called except in mockery a universe at all; and the law of causation is not the description of any feature of reality, nor of any portion of reality, but is the sham law of a sham world. All that exists is comprised in my consciousness, your consciousness, the conscious-

ness of Hermann, the consciousness of Hermann's Irish setter, and so forth—each individual being a distinct and separate stream of fact or centre of fact; and causation, at least as understood and formulated in the law of the uniformity of causation, obtains neither in the relations of individual to individual nor even amongst the psychoses of the "same" individual. So far as causation is concerned, every psychosis—almost every sensation at the very least—is a fresh start from nowhere to nowhere, a capricious absolute beginning in the realm of consciousness to be followed causally by nothing, perhaps even temporally by nothing. There are, in the technical scientific sense, no laws of nature, if by nature you mean anything actual as distinguished from what is hypothetical, and precisely non-actual and it may be even, in the sense above defined of "possible," non-possible. There are no "laws" of mind, no laws in introspective psychology, no laws that hold good of reality. Certainly the so-called laws of association are not such and do not purport to be; they do not affirm that a present impression or idea will be followed uniformly or unconditionally by a recollection of whatever states of consciousness in the "same" stream of thought have in the past been like it or associated by contiguity "in time or space" with the like of it; they say only that such a recollection may happen, or rather that approximately

such a recollection may happen—that if any recollection at all happens, it will be of this description. And this may serve as the formula of all purely subjective laws, of all laws which relate to what alone in the judgment of the psychological idealist is the world of reality: they none of them state that such psychoses are always, foreign intervention apart, followed by such and such others; they state only that such and such psychoses not uncommonly are so followed, or rather that in the general chaos of consciousness certain bits of sequences are “repeated,” meaning by “repeated” nothing more nor less than that amid great and striking differences certain fragmentary almost fanciful resemblances are not unobservable. And to bring forward the logical consequences of all this as an objection to psychological idealism serves mainly to put in question one’s own capacity for any metaphysical discussion whatever. “Many persons talk,” Professor James remarks, “as if the minutest dose of disconnectedness of one part with another, the smallest modicum of independence, the faintest tremor of ambiguity about the future, for example, would ruin everything and turn this goodly universe into a sort of insane sand-heap or nulliverse, and no universe at all.” If the “universe” is familiar and tolerable before it is precisely described, it does not cease to be familiar nor become intolerable after it is precisely

described, no matter how fantastic in the light of our prepossessions that description may appear. The principle relied on by those who attempt to refute this theory by pointing out its logical consequences seems to be that nothing is possible which it would greatly disconcert them to become aware of,—which would take them superlatively by surprise. It seems safe to affirm that this principle falls short of perfect self-evidence.

The Humean world, however, is in fact not so chaotic as it may on simple inspection appear; its rhythm is simply too complex to be rounded in a formula and too recondite to be laid open to inspection. Piece-meal and patternless as the mental world, the “multiverse,” as Professor James calls it, presents itself as being, we are in possession of a device susceptible to all appearance of indefinite improvement, that enables us already (if we may take for granted, as the psychological idealist insists on taking for granted, the general trustworthiness of memory and of “records” of the “past,”) to foretell approximately a considerable part of it—to foretell with some accuracy not only particular sensations and ideas for particular people, but changes in public sentiment and opinion and in the conduct of public and private life; and since the device is regular in the principles of its operation, and since it serves to foretell not only the psychoses of some one individual but of individuals generally, the

succession of discontinuous bits of reality would seem to be not utterly haphazard, presumably not at all haphazard, and the multiverse a multiverse in appearance only. The device in question, the machine for ready-reckoning, the formula—such as it is!—to be employed in calculating, is of course the feigned, the artificial, the conceived but otherwise transparently non-existent world of possibilities of sensation: science consists in modern, for the most part in quite modern, improvements in it; the law of causation is a very lately discovered rule-of-thumb precept for running the device to the best advantage,—the use of it has been found to yield more accurate results than were previously attainable; and the rest of the so-called laws of nature are of the same description. The world of possibilities of sensation is as purely an ideal scheme for the purpose of calculating the rhythm, the pulse, of something else, as were the cycles and epicycles of Ptolemaic astronomy; it was in the same sense “invented,” and has been in the same sense “improved:” the world of possibilities of sensation is a product, that is to say, of the involuntary play of the intellectual as distinguished from the aesthetic imagination; and indeed the Ptolemaic astronomy was in the period of its vogue but a detail, a modern improvement in its day, in that scheme. In the implications of the word “involuntary” is immanent the conception of a universe attaining

gradually a consciousness, or rather a number of consciousnesses, of its own unity, and making, it may be (fact remains to be proved), for perfection, for the perfect realization of some ideal: such at least might be the basis of the psychological idealist's philosophy of nature. Nay, the relations of the distinct and separate worlds of possibilities of sensation in the “minds” of different “individuals”—the real relations of the more or less contradictory incompatible *Weltbilder* of different people—to a central *Weltbild* that is the standard and exists nowhere, could be worked out with proper circumlocution along the lines of a social convention maintained by a consensus of the majority of mankind, and in the last resort by the forcible exclusion of dissenting individuals on the technical ground of incapacity, of lunacy. And the history of the “physical universe” before the appearance in it of consciousness is, according to psychological idealism, simply a hypothetical science of a not uncommon type; the out come of a disinterested play of the intelligence with one of its own instruments, and analogous, let us say, to a geometry of space of N dimensions.

3.

Psychological idealism is indeed intelligible; it is not nonsensical;—it is only perverse. *Vicerunt empirici* in truth, if the plain man's view of the

positions taken by the sceptic can be maintained; but psychological idealists of the type of John Stuart Mill are precisely not empiricists. They are of course precisely not rationalists either; the only rationalist worthy of the name is the sceptic and solipsist of the Specious Present. They are opportunists simply in metaphysics; they play fast and loose with empiricism, fast and loose with rationalism, quite in the manner of transcendental and objective idealists, though on occasions somewhat different. Granted their main contention, psychological idealists develop their paradox in as uncircumspect a spirit of empiricism as could be wished; but their main contention cannot by an empiricist be granted: their attempt to establish it is a paralogism—in a different context the same paralogism with which they pointedly reproach professed rationalists, and proceeds upon a denial of the distinctive principles upon which every subsequent step in the argument for psychological idealism rests.

Consider for a moment what the main contention of psychological idealism is, and what in substance are the grounds of it. The naive realist, (frankly, are we not all of us naive realists, at a loss merely for an effective seasonable retort to the clever sayings that an irresponsible spirit of scepticism has found to fling out against the faith that abides unshaken within us?),—the naive realist affirms with an unsuspecting

simplicity that he deals in introspection with one kind of stuff, and in perception with another; that his emotions, volitions, ideas, and generally his "states of consciousness," exist in so far only as they are felt, that their *esse* is *percipi*, but that his body, his clothes, the tables and chairs, the house, the earth and stars, the "outer world" which he "perceives," exist whether they are felt or not, that their *esse* is not *percipi*, that their independent existence is a condition precedent of their being perceived, that the more closely he scrutinizes them the more evidently he finds them to be not of the stuff with which he deals in introspection. If the psychological idealist is in an incautious mood, *gloriosus*,—the Latins would have said, and *gloriosus* the psychological idealist too often is,—he is capable of permitting himself the sweeping comment, that everything a mind can be conscious of, can know, is a state of consciousness. It is in this mood that Berkeley declares that nothing but an idea can be like an idea, that John Stuart Mill attributes a significance for Berkeley's theory of vision to the alleged fact that it is "end on" the "rays" of light strike the "retina," and that metaphysicians—if such they must be called—of a variety of schools expatiate upon the "conditions," and those too the "physical" conditions, of perception, meaning for aught they know the ineffectual accompaniments of the conditions of perception, or rather, since in sober sadness they

do not even know that perception is "conditioned" in the least, the fact of perception itself; expatiate upon "waves" of "light," "waves" of "sound," "currents" in the "nervous system," what you will, and expect us to infer from the mention of these "therefore" a darkness and silence (if darkness and silence may be regarded as negative) and general defect of feature in the universe as "in itself it is really." If, however, the psychological idealist is exercising the fineness and justness of discrimination by which he makes himself respected and worthy of reply, he objects simply to the naive realist that even if it be with a foreign stuff that we are dealing in perception, it is by the help (if he be cautious he will not say by the means or through the medium) of modes of consciousness that we deal with it; that whatever we take a knowledge of really in the act of perception, the act of perception itself is a mental process and the product of that act is a mental product resolvable into certain sensations given and certain ideas "found;" that confessedly in certain instances, in cases for example of "hallucination," the act takes place with reference to nothing non-mental or extra-mental; that if in every instance the act should take place with reference to nothing non-mental or extra-mental—if perception so-called should be really in every instance an hallucination differing from hallucinations distinctively so-called only in holding good

for all the "senses" and for "all people," our case would be precisely what it now is; and that it is therefore not impossible precisely that is now our case. The naive realist believes that he is in immediate mystic communication with the objects of his perceptions; that they are revealed, laid bare, to him as in themselves apart from the way in which he or anybody else perceives them they actually, "extra-mentally," in colour, shape, weight, hardness, and so forth, are; that he knows them in perception not, as in the case for example, of a past state of his own mind, by images, by representatives, by psychic similars, but directly—if not, as in the case of his own present emotions, by a sort of spiritual permeation, at the least by a sort of spiritual contact. But there is no object, the psychological idealist observes, following up his advantage, that is not perceived to be of such and such a description by one person, and of such and such a somewhat different description by a different person; there is in metaphysical strictness no object that is not perceived to be of one description by one person and of a more or less different description by every other person; there is no detail even of any object in regard to which any two persons, or even any two moments of perception of the "same" person, agree exactly; and since the object cannot therefore in all cases be extra-mentally, "in itself," what it is perceived to be,

and since there is as much and as little reason to trust one perception as another, and one person's perception as another's, and as much and as little reason to trust a perception in regard to one detail as in regard to another, it is not impossible that no object is in any case or in any detail what it is perceived to be; or rather, it is certain that no object laid bare in the act of perception is in the case of any two moments of consciousness the same. The naive realist believes, (it marks the utmost limit of his unwariness), that the objects, the very objects, which he perceives, may and do exist, may and do "maintain their identity," in the intervals when neither he nor anybody is perceiving them; the psychological idealist with admirable patience and acuteness observes, that except upon an assumption of the infallibility of the naive realist in question and not simply the fallibility but the actual error of all other men, (not μέτρον ἀνθρώπου but μέτρον ὁ δεῖνα), certainly the objects which *he* perceives do not exist extra-mentally at all; that at least it cannot be in reliance upon perception that objects can be affirmed to exist when they are not perceived; that plainly, in judging objects to exist the briefest instant prior or subsequent to his own or some one else's perception of them, the naive realist is passing beyond what the evidence in his or anybody's possession warrants; that it is certainly not impossible from anything which he

or anybody knows to the contrary that the objects perceived begin to exist as they begin to be perceived, and cease to exist as they cease to be perceived; that, accurately speaking, the sole permanence which the evidence warrants him or anybody in attributing to the objects of perception is a permanent possibility of being perceived, a possibility of being permanently or rather repeatedly perceived, and that too only on an interpretation of "permanence" and of "repetition" which deprives those words of all suggestion of hidden identity or unbroken continuity in the objects to which they are applied; that in short the naive realist's faith in an extra-mental somewhat perceived is an exercise not so much of his intelligence as of his primitive credulity—of his primitive ability to persuade himself even of the sheer unmeaning.

"My conception of the table at which I am writing," Mill says, in language that no doubt leaves much to be desired, but with a meaning unmistakable enough, "is compounded of its visible form and size, which are complex sensations of sight; its tangible form and size, which are complex sensations of our organs of touch and of our muscles; its weight, which is also a sensation of touch and of the muscles; its colour, which is a sensation of sight; its hardness, which is a sensation of the muscles; its composition, which is another word for all the varieties of sensation which

we receive under various circumstances from the wood of which it is composed made ; and so forth. All or most of these various sensations frequently are, and, as we learn by experience, always might be, experienced simultaneously, or in many different orders of succession, at our own choice : and hence the thought of any one of them makes us think of the others, and the whole becomes mentally amalgamated into one mixed state of consciousness, which in the language of the school of Locke and Hartley, is termed a complete Idea.

"Now there are philosophers who have argued as follows : If we conceive an orange to be divested of its natural colour without acquiring any new one ; to lose its softness without becoming hard ; its roundness without becoming square or pentagonal, or any other regular or irregular figure whatever ; to be deprived of size, of weight, of taste, of smell ; to lose all its mechanical and all its chemical properties, and acquire no new ones ; to become in short invisible, intangible, imperceptible not only by all our senses, but by the senses of all other sentient beings, real or possible ; nothing, say these thinkers, would remain. For of what nature, they ask, could be the residuum ? And by what token could it manifest its presence ? To the unreflecting its existence seems to rest on the evidence of the senses. But to the senses nothing is apparent except the sensations. We know indeed that these sensations are bound to-

gether by some law ; they do not come together at random but according to a systematic order, which is part of the order established in the universe. When we experience one of these sensations, we usually experience the others also, or know that we have it in our power to experience them. But a fixed law of connection making these sensations occur together does not, according to these philosophers, necessarily require what is called a substratum to support them. The conception of a substratum is but one of many possible forms in which that connection presents itself to our imagination ; a mode of, as it were, realizing the idea. If there be such a substratum, suppose it at this instance miraculously annihilated, and let the sensations continue to occur in the same order, and how would the substratum be missed ? By what signs should we be able to discover that its existence had terminated ? Should we not have as much reason to believe that it still existed as we now have ? And if we should not then be warranted in believing it, how can we be so now ? A body, therefore, according to these metaphysicians, is not anything intrinsically different from the sensations which the body is said to produce in us ; it is, in short, a set of sensations, or rather, of possibilities of sensations, joined together according to a fixed law."¹

In these words we have a logically sufficient

¹Mill's *Logic* vol. 1, pp. 62-64, Ninth Edition.

statement of the grounds on which the main contention of psychological idealism is based. And on behalf of the naive realist it may be answered, that we have here again the case of memory and of inference, and the exaction of intuitive certainty, or rather security, from a process not intuitive. If the account that intuition can give of sensation, or rather of perception (here as frequently elsewhere Mill's words would be ridiculous if they were not inspired—if they did not always succeed so happily in meaning what they do not say), is adequate, is complete, so also in equality of logic is the account that intuition can give, does give, of memory and inference. If perception, whatever it may take cognizance of, is at least a present mental act and the product of it a present mental product; so also are memory and inference, whatever they may take cognizance of, at least present mental acts, and the products of them present mental products. If confessedly in the case of perception the mental act sometimes, as for example in hallucinations, takes place in regard to nothing "external"—if confessedly there are "false" perceptions, so also confessedly there are false memories and inferences—illusions of memory and groundless inferences. If it is "not impossible" that all perceptions are of that kind, neither is it "impossible" that all memories and inferences are of that kind. If it is fair to apply the

legal maxim, (which no man in his senses, by the way, ever thought of taking literally in extension as a statement of fact), *falsus in uno falsus in omnibus*, to the testimony of perception, it is not less fair to apply that maxim as unflinchingly to the testimony of memory and inference; and if it is a case for proportion, then "confessedly" the proportion of memories and inferences that are "false" is greater than the proportion of perceptions. If it is significant and convincing to urge that, were our perceptions quite as they at present are and the stuff which they are supposed to reveal annihilated, it is not impossible that none of us would distinguish the difference, and that *therefore* in asserting the existence of any such stuff we are going manifestly beyond anything we know; it is equally significant and convincing to urge that, were our memories and inferences quite as they at present are, and had there been no past time, and were there to be no future time and no fact or conditional fact beyond our Specious Present, it is not impossible we should not distinguish the difference, and that *therefore* in asserting the existence of a past or of a future or of our fellow beings we are going manifestly beyond anything we know; and if the fitfulness of perception affords ground to conclude the intermittent existence of the fact perceived, then the fitfulness of memory and of inference affords ground to conclude an intermittent past

and an intermittent future—whatever that may mean.

It may be said indeed by the psychological idealist, that memory and inference deal at least with a stuff with which we are familiar, and that their deliverances therefore are at least not unmeaning. But statements such as that, it may on behalf of the naive realist be replied, do such violence to the patent fact that it is scarcely decorous to call them by their proper name. To say that (except through memory!) we know anything of consciousness really no longer existent, of our own past consciousness *qua* past, or that (except through inference!) we know anything of consciousness-not-yet-existent *qua* not-yet-existent, or of consciousness ejective-to-our-own *qua* ejective-to-our-own; still more to say that we are "familiar" with such matters in a way in which the naive realist cannot fairly suppose himself familiar with the stuff of which his chairs and tables are composed;—is to abound in one's own sense to the point of sheer fatuity. We deal in memory with one sort of stuff of which it belongs to the essence "to have been" in the consciousness of the person who remembers and perhaps of that person only; we deal in inference with another sort of stuff of which it belongs to the essence "not to be" in the consciousness of the person who infers, and perhaps never to have been and never afterward to be in his or in anybody

else's consciousness, though it may have been and may be or may both have been and may be in the consciousness of several persons at the same time or at different times or both; we deal in perception with a third sort of stuff, which may be in the consciousness of two or more persons at the same time, and may have been in their consciousness in the past, and may be in their consciousness in the future, and which we have no reason or impulse to believe is dependent on consciousness—on being known or felt—for its existence or its continuity or its mutations or, almost it might be said, its anything; we deal in intuition with a fourth sort of stuff, simply, of which it is the essence to be at the passing moment and at that one moment only by the person who intuitively felt. With memories, inferences, and perceptions intuition, it would seem, can deal so far only as they present the stuff with which it is specially adapted to deal; of the stuffs with which they are respectively adapted to deal and intuition is not, intuition can say nothing. Memories, inferences and perceptions alike are to intuition mere modes of present consciousness; and so long as we insist on restricting ourselves to intuition, past mental stuff and inferential stuff are to the full as unknown, as unfamiliar, as unmeaning, as extra-mental or non-mental stuff. The sceptic and solipsist of the Specious Present adopts the restriction and abides by it consistently; the naive realist refuses to adopt the restriction—

the whole of "knowledge" cannot, he affirms, be brought within the limits of intuition—and abides consistently by his refusal. The psychological idealist makes a capricious selection. There are in other words four modes (four at least) of the intelligence, in at least three of which one is, to all appearance by the help of a mental construction, in immediate mystic communication with somewhat that transcends one's Specious Present. The mental construction can in each case be described, and some of the "physical" or other "conditions" of it ascertained; but the description and ascertainment of conditions are not an explanation; they leave the question, how a mental construction like that can help to put one in immediate mystic communication with somewhat that transcends one's Specious Present, quite untouched. That in each class of cases the appropriate construction does help to put one in such communication—at least that in memory, inference, and perception, one is in such communication, we know on the authority of those respective modes of the intelligence, and the authority of each in regard to the matter with which it specially deals is ultimate. As profitably might we deny the ultimate authority of sight in matters of colour, or of hearing in those of sound, or of smell in those of odour, as of memory or of inference or of perception in the matters with which exclusively each deals. We might as well deny the fact intuited

on the ground that it cannot be perceived, as the fact perceived on the ground that it cannot be intuited. We might as well deny the reality of odours or of sounds on the ground that they cannot be seen: we might as well choose one of the modes of sensibility as the standard, and capriciously neglect some or all of the others, as choose one of the modes of the intelligence, and capriciously neglect some or all of the others. In two of the three classes of cases of mystic communication the psychological idealist stands ready to accept the mystery. He does not pretend to say more of memory, for example, than that, being a mental construction of a peculiar description, it is not remarkable that it should "constitute" a peculiar mode of consciousness with a peculiar cognitive function. He raises objections in the third class of cases only. But the objections which he raises apply equally to the two other classes, and indeed in principle to any metaphysics except a scepticism and solipsism of the Specious Present.

The psychological idealist has accordingly two standards of logic—a "higher rule" for other people, a "lower" for himself. His destructive principle, his higher rule, is to deny everything (that he has an aversion from!) which may not impossibly be false; his constructive principle, his lower rule, is to affirm everything (that he has a leaning toward!) which may not

impossibly be true. The psychological idealist, first, in alliance with the sceptic, criticises the naive realist's beliefs on the basis of the destructive principle, and finds them full of groundless conclusions. He then examines the human intelligence as an instrument of knowledge, and finds it full of incurable imperfections; he announces, with admirable good sense, that if the words logic and knowledge are to have a meaning they must refer to such logic and knowledge as the sole instrument of logic and knowledge we possess is competent to effect. He concludes that the imperfections of that instrument must be accepted and "allowed for"—its "personal equation" must be calculated. But it is precisely that calculation which tentatively, instinctively, in the course of many generations of his kind, the naive realist has on the whole succeeded admirably well in making; it is in the respects in which the naive realist has on the whole succeeded admirably well that the psychological idealist endeavours to prove him in the wrong. Except upon a theory of pre-established harmonies that explains nothing and itself needs explanation, no peculiarity of the knowledge that is explicable as a natural result of an imperfection in the knower can rationally be ascribed to the thing known:—that is the principle upon which the naive realist in his calculation has in effect proceeded. If the knower in the case of

mankind, if mankind's instrument of knowledge, the human intelligence, possessed the eternal unwavering intuition ascribed to God, any intermittence in its perception of an object, in its act of knowing an object, would be due no doubt simply to an intermittence in the existence of the object itself; but the human intelligence possesses nothing of the kind; it operates unsteadily; except in intuition it operates at all only by a system of "constructions"—as it were of "focuses": it must be focused for memory to obtain a knowledge of its past, it must be focused for inference to obtain a knowledge of the stuff in inference revealed, it must be focused for perception to obtain a knowledge of the stuff in perception revealed; and in none of these focuses does it remain; it varies from minute to minute, from second to second even and its perception (in the primary sense the word perception properly includes both memory and inference!) of its objects varies with every variation in its focussing; the variation in the knowing is in reason therefore to be regarded as resulting from the patent variations in the knower with which patently it coincides, rather than from hidden variations in the object with which, by a gratuitously imagined pre-established harmony, it may be surmised to coincide. The naive realist keeps indeed more scrupulously within the import of the evidence before him, affirms really

less about the outer world, when he says that it persists in the intervals of perception, than he would, if he should say that the outer world does not so persist, or even that, although seemingly it so persists, there is a possibility deserving of attention that it does not: when he knows the outer world at all, he knows it as persistent; to opine that when he does not know it, it persists, is simply to decline in the absence of all reason to entertain the notion that it ceases to persist, that it goes out of being and again comes into being, innumerable times in perfect harmony with the variations in the focusing of his intelligence. The naive realist simply declines in the absence of all evidence to regard so monstrous a pre-established harmony as actual or even as not incredible.

It is by a like reckoning that the naive realist is justified in his conclusion that the same object is cognised by different persons. If the knower in the case of mankind, if mankind's instrument of knowledge, the human intelligence, possessed the equal unvarying intuition ascribed to God—were, like the equal unwavering intuition ascribed to God, eternally equal to itself and in the same relation to its objects, then indeed the fact that in metaphysical strictness there is no object and no detail of any object which is not cognised as of one description by one person or moment of consciousness, and as of a more or less different

description by every other person or moment of consciousness, would be significant—would prove that the object laid bare in the act of intelligence is in the case of no two persons or moments of consciousness the same. But that supposition is false: the plain fact is, if we know anything at all about our neighbours and ourselves, that in no two people and at no two moments in the consciousness of the same person are the powers of the intelligence equal or the objects perceived presented at the same distance, at the same angle, in the same circumstances of temperature, atmosphere, emotional or intellectual pre-occupation,—what you will, objective or subjective; every difference in the knowledge by different persons or by different moments of the same person of what in common speech would be called “any given object” is explicable, is in every case indeed in which we are in a position to ascertain the conditions of the knowing found actually to be explained, either by some difference in the knower or some difference in the condition of the knowing, and belongs therefore, as the plain man from time immemorial has perceived, to the personal equation of the knower and not to the object known. To different persons and to the different moments of the same person is laid bare, according to the naive realist, a different aspect of the given object and its circumstances; the given object plus its

circumstances is the simplest, the only, expression by which we can denote the object of perception; the different persons or different moments of the same person take cognizance each of a part of that object, and in so far as they cognize that part cognise it rightly as in itself it really is; and those parts, when the different persons of the different moments "compare notes", are found to fit together with a nicety of adjustment to form a whole—the whole of a single continuous orderly world revealed in part to one knower, in part to another.

Complex as is that account, it is no more complex than the fact accounted for, and is simplicity itself as compared with the account given by the psychological idealist. One argument and only one, if argument it be, the psychological idealist is not to be deprived of. Even if the knower in the case of mankind, even if the human intelligence, did possess the equal unwavering intuition ascribed to God and beyond doubt were dealing with an alien stuff, it would still be possible for the psychological idealist in the application of his "higher rule" to object, that even if it be with a foreign stuff that the intelligence is dealing it is by the help of modes of consciousness that stuff is dealt with; that whatever we take a knowledge of really, the act of knowing is a mental process and the product, knowledge, is a mental product; and that, given the act

and the product; we might well do without the stuff: but it would still be possible to reply, and not a whit more justly in that hypothetical case than in the case as it exists, that a part of the personal equation of every instrument is the instrument itself, the mere fact that it is employed at all, the fact of its mere presence; that to object that knowledge is in that sense "relative" is to take seriously the elaborate truism, that no matter what we know it is always we that know it; that the rank in reason of a doctrine of relativity velylike that is no higher than that of the doctrine of the inept absolute, the absolute which is so fragile that to name it, or even to refrain from naming it, is to destroy it. The naive realist has in point of fact accepted the presence of his instrument with all its defects, and calculated its personal equation, and allowed for it. The psychological idealist in his destructive criticism fails to accept his instrument with any of its defects, and to calculate its personal equation, and to allow for it,—it is because of his own failure at every point in this respect that in his destructive criticism he finds the plain man's realism at every point in fault; the psychological idealist in his constructive criticism accepts his instrument with some but not with all of its defects, and picks and chooses which defects he will allow for—it is because of his own failure to accept and make allowance for them all that his construction when complete is not a

simple re-establishment of the realism of the plain man. As to hallucinations and illusions, there is a personal equation to be allowed for in regard to them in the cases also of memory and of inference; there are hallucinations and illusions of memory and of inference no less than of perception. The naive realist allows for hallucinations in the three cases equally; he is perfectly aware, as in the cases of memory and inference the psychological idealist also shows himself aware, that the maxim *falsus in uno falsus in omnibus*, always misleading, is when applied to the human intelligence grotesque. The psychologist idealist declines, and the case of perception, to accept an instrument that has been found from time to time to play him false—hence his rejection of perception on the ground that its testimony lacks metaphysical certitude, the certitude, that is to say, of intuition. In theory he hastens to contend, at least against his solipsist and sceptic of the Specious Present, that without exception every peculiarity in the instrument of knowledge must be allowed for; in practice he picks and chooses what peculiarities he will allow for and what he will not. Metaphysical certitude!—except in *argumentum ad hominem* against the rationalist or the solipsist and sceptic, by what right can the psychological idealist demand in proof of anything such certitude as that?

4.

Nay, the psychological idealist has been unfortunate in his selection of a mode of knowledge to reject, and has relied upon the sceptic at the point where the sceptic's thesis will least bear examination; it is to perception, rather than memory or inference, that there may with most obvious reason be ascribed a certitude resembling the certitude of intuition. However lacking in metaphysical strictness may be the demonstration of some portions of the thesis of the naive realist there is in that thesis one proposition which is except in words undeniable, and is in words by the sceptic and by the psychological idealist denied, and necessarily in self-defence denied. The existence of a world of non-mental stuff, at times when it is by nobody perceived, the perception by anybody in the past of such a world, the naive realist finds himself neither more nor less unable to place utterly beyond the possibility of dispute than he does the existence in the past of himself or of persons other than himself: the existence of a world of non-mental stuff at the present moment by himself perceived is another matter, is self-evident, simply. The material landscape is neither within the material head, nor within the mental head, nor beneath the mental landscape; there is no mental landscape except in case of illusion or hallucination, and then the

mental landscape would be devoid of plausibility were it not believed to be as truly outside the material head as is the material landscape. "To the senses", so the sceptic said, "nothing is apparent except sensation: the act of perception is a mental process, and the product of that act is a mental product, resolvable into certain sensations given and certain ideas found; so much of one's vision of the world as is historical, so much of one's vision of the world as relates to the past or to the future, is admitted to be in stuff distinctly mental, and upon a steady scrutiny much of what is at first regarded as present, as given, is seen to be in stuff the same as what is historical, to be in effect reminiscent or inferential; and the rest is seen to be sensation, and sensation is mental." What reckless inconsistency, the defender of the naive realist well may cry, and quibbling, and cavilling! Either there are two words "sensation" which are alike in nothing but in sound—either there are two words "sensation" signifying one of them certain things in stuff mental, the other certain things in stuff non-mental; or the word "sensation" has by metaphysicians and psychologists been applied in perverse indiscrimination to things patently disparate, to things disparate so patently that the very metaphysicians and psychologists who in their speculations now confound them learned in childhood the difference between them, or rather discovered for them-

selves in childhood that difference, and on no practical occasion in life have since ignored it. Brass and iron are not of a piece with volitions and emotions, nor with the astonishment of a sensitive consciousness at the shock of contact with an alien and ruder mode of being: the difference in stuff is matter of immediate cognition, of direct comparison, of a comparison as direct as that of two bits of present feeling, of two portions of the Specious Present. A comparison indeed of two portions of the Specious Present that comparison precisely and literally is; perceived brass and iron precisely and literally are present; and if you ask present to what, and present to what that compares them; and if you affirm that intuition by definition can know nothing of anything in the Specious Present that is in stuff non-mental; present, the reply is, to the intelligence as a whole, compared by the intelligence of the whole, of which intuition, in that case, like memory or inference or perception, is but one function, and a function of which it is sufficiently heedless to speak as if it were the whole, or even a whole, or capable of a separate existence or of a separate activity.

"It is surely the stupidest of losses to confuse things which right reason has put asunder, to lose the sense of achieved distinctions:" plain as the distinction is between sensations and perceptions, it has been ignored by Berkeley and

his followers: to the neglect of this distinction the whole system of Berkeleyan idealism is due. "Is not the most vehement and intense degree of heat," asks Berkeley, in the person of Philonous, "a very great pain?" The perception of very great heat, it may be answered, is accompanied by very great pain: but the heat perceived is not the pain. A great sound, or rather the special vibration in the atmosphere accompanying a great sound, may burst the drum of the ear, destroy or mar the instrument of the perception of sound; a great heat, or rather the special vibration in the atmosphere accompanying a great heat, may char the flesh, destroy or mar the instrument of the perception of heat; in either case the destruction or injury will cause great sensuous pain. The range of all the organs of sense is narrow; the senses are in differing degrees and within differing limits organs of perception and sensation. The sense of taste, for example, if it is distinguished from the sense of touch and the sense for temperature, affords, frequently at least, a volume of sensation manifestly in excess of any elements it affords us of perception: the sense for temperature is within very moderate limits an instrument of perception, and becomes, when these are overpassed, an instrument of sensation only. It is in the case of sight perhaps that a predominance of perception over sensation is most manifest. If there really are objects in stuff

non-mental, the Berkeleyan idealist argues, let them remain as they are and let us cease to have sensations from them, how then could we distinguish the presence of those objects, the existence of those objects, what sort of knowledge of them would be possible? We could distinguish their presence, their existence, it may be answered, precisely as we do now; precisely the knowledge of them that is now possible would then be possible; the object of perception would lose nothing of its perceived precision, its infinite detail, from the absence of sensations, as it gains nothing by the presence of sensations; we should possess our external world as before, but possess it without sensuous zest, with sensuous apathy, as in moments of dullness we do actually possess it. "If there really are objects in stuff non-mental," the Berkeleyan idealist argues, "let them by a fiat of omnipotence be annihilated and let our sensations occur in all respects as before; of what should we be deprived?"—Of the entire external world, it may be answered;—of everything we know as the external world: of all colour and form and sound; of all roughness and toughness and solidity; of brass and iron, and of the very flesh and bones of our proper bodies. If it be argued that whether or not heat and sound and colour and solidity are perceived, brass and iron are not, because what we call by the name of brass and iron and say that at any given moment

we perceive is in truth composed of elements of which some only are perceived and some remembered or inferred; the answer is that brass and iron are self-evidently in part perceived; and that our *Weltbild* at the given moment, our vision for the time being of the external world, may best be likened to one of those circular pictures in which the objects close at hand are "real," and the remoter objects and the horizon and the sky are painted on canvas, and the line where the picture begins and "reality" ends is one that it demands close attention to discern and attention all but superhumanly steadfast not from second to second to forget. The portions of the world perceived may be distinguished, even if only by a effort, from the portions known by inference or memory only; a constant possession of that distinction we perhaps cannot maintain, but a constant command of it we can maintain; and both the portions presented and the portions remembered or inferred are in stuff non-mental. If here again it be alleged that men's perceptions differ; that what is to one man red is to another green, that what is to one man hot is to another cold, and that even what is to one hand hot is to the other hand of the same man cold,—the answer is that the agreement among perceptions is more fundamental far than any difference, and that the differences are such as when the imperfections of the instrument have been allowed

for are found to disappear. "Is it not an absurdity," asks Berkeley, in the person of Philonous, "to think that the same thing should be at the same time both cold and warm? Suppose now one of your hands hot, and the other cold, and they are both at once put into the same vessel of water in an intermediate state; will not the water seem cold to one hand, and warm to the other?" Is it not beside the mark, it may be answered, to put such a question, when in the self-same sentence it has been admitted that the instrument of perception has been tampered with? The sense for temperature, like other senses, requires an appreciable time for a change of adjustment. By hypothesis, in the case supposed, the two hands had been severally adjusted to perceive different temperatures, and temperatures both different from the temperature of the water into which the hands were alternately to be plunged. What the hands at first reveal when they are plunged together into the water is that a change of adjustment is necessary, and for either hand a different change; when the differences have been allowed for, it is the same temperature that is revealed for us by either hand. Or is it objected that water of the "same" temperature, the thermometer being taken as a test, may to a man feel cold at one time and not cold or not so cold at another, or feel cold to one man and not cold to another, and that therefore

the perception of temperature even after the instrument has been fully adjusted is still relative? Relative, the reply is still, to the imperfections of the instrument. Fully adjusted the instrument can seldom be: the instrument has beforehand always been adjusted to one or another temperature; the instrument in question, the human instrument, has in fact a varying temperature of its own; the instrument in question has in fact in all respects a varying efficiency—even a varying existence: what has been an organ of perception may become, as has been seen, within narrower bounds an organ of perception, may for the moment or forever cease to be an organ of perception at all. What the organ of perception shows whenever it is efficient, or indeed existent, suffices for the thesis of the naive realist as against the thesis of his adversary; whether it be heat or cold that is perceived, there is perceived temperature; whether it be red or green that is perceived, there is perceived colour; what by the naive realist is maintained as against his adversary is the existence of the coloured, the attempered thing. If it be said, "An instrument of perception that enables us to perceive nothing precisely, enables us to perceive precisely nothing:" the reply is, that that saying is a quibble simply; the standard of precision thus appealed to is a standard of precision that the human intelligence has been found unable to employ;

the standard of precision thus appealed to would be fatal first of all to the objections urged by the psychological idealist himself. Those objections form indeed an excellent example of the disposition to play fast and loose with a higher and a lower rule of evidence already noted in the psychological idealist. Under a consistent application of the higher rule it would not follow, even on the hypothesis of realism, from the experiment of Berkeley, that the same thing must at the same time be both cold and warm; according to the higher rule the experiment of Berkeley simply is not and cannot be made conclusive. The two hands are not in contact, and cannot be brought into contact with the same particles in the supposed vessel, and it is always "possible" that the water in the vessel is in one place of one temperature and in another of another. Nay, if the hands are, as by hypothesis they are, of different temperatures, it is certain that the particles of water in immediate proximity to the hands will be affected; and what holds in this matter of sameness for two hands hold also for a hand and a thermometer, or for two thermometers. And under a consistent application of that higher rule it is impossible to urge that the "same" temperature, the thermometer being taken as a test, is cold and not cold or not so cold to the "same" man at different times or to different men at the same time; according to that higher

rule it is impossible to show that the man at the different times in question is the same man, or that the thermometer employed is the same thermometer, or that there have been different times, or that what one man feels and means when he says "cold" is not the precise psychic equivalent of what another man feels and means when he says "not cold" or "not so cold." What holds, even according to the higher rule of evidence, is that temperature is perceived. It is true that the imperfections of the instrument can in no such case—can in no case of any kind—be calculated with absolute exactitude; they may, however, with an accuracy sufficient for all speculative purposes, be taken into account. Fancy the astronomer who should say: "It is not certain to the fraction of a second when the transit of Venus occurred; *therefore* it is not certain it occurred at all!"

If it be urged that even with regard to the existence of the thing perceived the testimony of perception lacks the certitude of the testimony of intuition, because admittedly there are not only errors but hallucinations of perception—because admittedly we believe that we perceive when we do not perceive: the answer is, that there is a distinction to be borne in mind not only between sensations and perceptions, but between sensations and perceptions on the one hand and memories, inferences, and ideas on the other.

Ideas may resemble non-mental things; sensations never do; perceptions never do. What is intuited is intuited not by a process of mirroring, not by the mediation of images, not by a substitution of similars, but directly; what is perceived, in like manner, is perceived not by a process of mirroring, not by the mediation of images, not by a substitution of similars but directly the mind possessing at the time—possessing at least necessarily, neither sensations from the things nor ideas from them, but only in their alien substantiality the things themselves. Ideas may be copies, and copies less or more exact, even to the point of sheer deception: ideas, without being copies may resemble, and the resemblance may be less or more exact, even to the point, in moments of inattention, of sheer deception. Inferred objects and remembered objects in like manner resemble perceived objects, and the resemblance may be less or more exact, less or more deceptive. What is called a false perception is due sometimes to the imperfections that must be allowed for in the instrument of perception, and sometimes to the mistaking for a perceived object of a remembered object or an inferred object or a mere idea. An illusion of perception is in strictness that—an idea by virtue of resemblance to a perceived object persistently suggesting a belief persistently rejected that it is itself in stuff non-mental; or else an inferred object or a re-

membered object by virtue of resemblance to a perceived object persistently suggesting a belief persistently rejected that it is itself perceived. An hallucination of perception is in strictness that—an idea by virtue of resemblance to a perceived object persistently suggesting a belief not rejected, or rejected only intermittently, that it is itself in stuff non-mental; or else an inferred or a remembered object by virtue of resemblance to a perceived object persistently suggesting a belief not rejected, or rejected only intermittently, that it is itself perceived. There is no ground for wonder that resemblances are sometimes a source of error; there would be ground for wonder rather if where resemblances exist, they never were in point of fact of an exactness sufficient to deceive. But the fault in this deception, self-evidently, does not lie with perception; it cannot be the function of perception to inform us whether or not we do perceive; the fault lies rather with intuition. Whatever is by their means cognized, ideation and inferring and remembering and perceiving are beyond controversy present mental activities, cognized, if at all, by intuition, and distinguished one from another, if at all, by intuition. If the comparison between ideation and perceiving, or remembering and perceiving, or inferring and perceiving, is in any instance not made at all, or made unsatisfactorily, it is intuition that has failed us; if the comparison is in any instance

made and the distinction drawn, as admittedly in instance after instance the comparison is made and the distinction drawn, then the comparison and the distinction have the certitude of very intuition.

Nay, the certitude of intuition may be said to attach even to our knowledge of the objects of perception, and to our knowledge, too, of objects and of states of consciousness remembered or inferred. There is a distinction immediately cognized, if cognized at all, and admittedly it is in fact cognized, not only between perceiving, remembering and inferring, respectively, and between perceiving and mere ideation, but also between remembering and mere ideation, inferring and mere ideation. Ideas may resemble what is non-mental and they may resemble also what is mental; they may resemble what is non-mental and what is mental, past, present, future or conditional, and the resemblance may be, and not seldom is, of an exactness sufficient to deceive. What is called a false memory is due sometimes to the imperfections to be allowed for in the instrument of memory, sometimes to the mistaking for a remembered object of a perceived object or an inferred object or a mere idea, sometimes to the mistaking for a remembered state of consciousness of an intuited or inferred state of consciousness or a mere idea. What is called a false inference is due sometimes to the imperfections to

be allowed for in the instrument of inference, sometimes to the mistaking for an inferred object of a perceived or a remembered object or a mere idea, sometimes to the mistaking for an inferred state of consciousness of an intuited or a remembered state of consciousness or a mere idea. There are obvious reasons why ideas should be the sources of most frequent error: ideas are the great resemblers; they are also the current coin of thought. Ideas stand toward perceptions, memories and inferences in much the same relation in which words stand toward perceptions, memories and inferences, and toward ideas: they have greater currency, they facilitate the processes of thought; in our processes of thought we for the most part deal not with perceptions, memories and inferences, but with ideas. The ideas used instead of perceptions, memories and inferences are in these processes supposed to be faithful copies—to be representative; they may, however, represent inaccurately—they may even not represent at all. There are attributes that self-evidently they cannot represent with adequacy, and one of these is non-mentality. Nevertheless they are not infrequently and not unnaturally mistaken for that which they purport to represent. If the difference in stuff between sensations properly so called and perceived objects has so long escaped the sceptic and the Berkeleyan idealist, it is because what are currently compared are

ideas of sensations and ideas of perceived objects; and ideas of perceived objects are of course in stuff mental. If the difference in stuff between ideas and remembered objects, ideas and inferred objects, has in like manner passed unnoticed, it is because what are currently compared are ideas of objects and ideas of remembered objects, ideas of objects and ideas of inferred objects; and ideas of remembered objects and ideas of inferred objects are of course in stuff mental, and are of course powerless to reveal the conditionally real or the future or the past. Between perceived objects and the ideas that resemble them there exists as a rule a difference in fulness of detail and vividness in favour of the perceived object—a difference readily recognizable and precluding many chances of mistake: there are almost always—perhaps always—present to consciousness perceived objects, and the possibility of immediate comparison facilitates the detection of mistake; in case of false opinion concerning the activity of one organ of perception, there is possible in most cases an appeal to some other organ of perception, and the possibility of this appeal of course facilitates the detection of mistake. In cases where ideas were mistaken for memories or inferences, the appeal to other means of knowledge is tardier and more difficult; in many moments there are present to consciousness neither remembered objects nor inferred objects

for comparison; and the difference in fulness of detail and vividness affords no clue—remembered or inferred objects may be indeed more vivid and richer in detail than the ideas that resemble them, but they are frequently less vivid and poorer in detail. Nevertheless the difference between remembered objects and ideas, inferred objects and ideas, is less obvious than that between perceived objects and ideas, is no less precise and definite, and is in the vast majority of instances perfectly discerned by the plain man. The plain man knows himself in fixing “the mind’s eye” on the remembered house to be looking at something different from a mere idea—to be looking at a house as really it was. If it be asked why then he does not always, as the phrase is, trust his memory,—why he believes so often that he does not see the house in its entirety as it really was,—the answer is, for the same reason that in looking at a house perceived across a mist—mist of the hillside, mist of failing eyesight, as the case may be—he believes he is not seeing that house in its entirety as it really is he infers from perceived objects close at hand, he infers from memories of other objects, that there must be details more numerous and vivid than those at the moment cognized: he makes allowance for the imperfections of the instrument by means of which he sees. In his effort to perceive all that can be perceived he finds the blanks due to the imperfec-

tions of his instrument supplied sometimes by remembered objects, sometimes by inferred objects, occasionally by ideas; in his effort to remember all that can be remembered, he finds the blanks due to the imperfections of his instrument supplied sometimes by perceived objects, sometimes by inferred objects, not seldom by ideas; his scanty knowledge tends to become supplemented by ideas, confounded with ideas. It is when the lights are low that resemblances most naturally deceive—when the object is perceived in darkness, in distance, or in mist, or when it is remembered, not perceived, inferred, not perceived. Nevertheless the difference becomes for the plain man, when he attends a matter of immediate knowledge. To be seen dimly still is to be seen: the appeal is to inspection. The house dimly perceived across a mist is different in stuff from the idea of a house, however exact and vivid; the house dimly remembered—seen, as we sometimes say, across the mist of years, differs in stuff from the idea of a house existent many years ago, however exact and vivid:—who ever mistook the Pyncheon house for that in which he lived in infancy? who has retained of the house he has not seen since infancy an image so exact and vivid? The house which, seeing the masons at work upon a plot of ground, we infer will stand there a year hence, differs from the idea of a house existent a year hence upon that plot of

ground, even though concerning the size and structure of the house the masons are about to build we draw and in the nature of the case can draw no inference whatever: the house inferred, although inferred without outline or details, differs in stuff from the idea of a house, however exact and vivid. It has been suggested that memories are but ideas the inferences from which prove true. The answer is that as a rule, from ideas recognized as such no inferences to the real world are drawn at all, and that numberless ideas are at once so recognized, and accordingly from numberless ideas no inferences to the real world are drawn; whereas from things remembered, things perceived and things inferred, inferences to the real world are drawn correctly, and in the incalculably greater number of cases not disproved and not to be disproved.² This difference in the mode of dealing with ideation the one hand and with remembered or perceived or inferred objects on the other, would self-evidently not exist, were there between ideas and remembered or perceived or inferred objects no difference immediately discerned. And if ideation and remembering and perceiving and inferring are mental activities, and the differences between them, when cognized, are cognized by intuition, then it would seem that intuition must cognize not only ideas but things perceived and

² *Supra*, pp. 130, 132.

things remembered and things inferred; how should the differences between ideation and remembering and perceiving and inferring be cognized without cognition of the differences between ideas and things perceived and things remembered and things inferred? How should the difference between seeing and hearing be cognized without cognition of the difference between sights and sounds? Intuition has indeed been said to be by definition immediate knowledge, and immediate knowledge of what is mental only; but if what is immediately known and is beyond question mental cannot be immediately known without immediate knowledge of what is non-mental, then what cognizes the mental cognizes also the non-mental, and intuition has been misdefined: either there is no mode of consciousness called properly by the name of intuition, or the name of intuition belongs properly to what cognizes alike ideas, sensations, emotions and volitions, and things perceived and things remembered and things inferred.

Suffice it in any case that the steady scrutiny to which the sceptic makes appeal decides against him: if intuition is taken to mean not merely introspection but immediate inspection, then the difference between things perceived, remembered or inferred on the one hand, and on the other the matters with which introspection has to deal, is known intuitively; if intuition is taken to mean introspection only, then there must be admitted to

exist another mode or other modes of knowledge that are immediate. It never will be well with metaphysics, the defender of the naive realist finds but too much cause to say, so long as the finer, defter powers of the intelligence, are reserved for exercise upon all portions of philosophy except precisely the beginnings. It never will be well with metaphysics so long as it is permissible to lay hold of uncriticised unqualified commonplaces,—"Nothing but an idea can be like an idea," "The mind can be conscious of nothing but a mode of consciousness," "The mind can know nothing but what is *in* the mind," "The senses can give nothing but sensations," "The conscious never can be generated from the unconscious,"—and to reason from them strenuously in contempt of common knowledge and of common sense, revering the laws of tragedy rather than the laws of science, and preferring plausibly inferred impossibilities to uninferred plain fact. To the metaphysician who looks patiently and steadily there is revealed a world not in essentials different from the world revealed to the plain man. In that world it is the present in the narrower sense that is for the most part clearest, as it is to the plain man: and within that present there is knowledge of things mental and of things non-mental. And the limits of the present in that revealing here and now what lies beyond the narrower sense are as walls pierced with windows, limits of the here and now

—revealing things remembered and things inferred: and things remembered and things inferred are in like manner some mental, some non-mental: a remembered sorrow is in stuff different from a house remembered, an inferred sorrow from a house inferred. There is knowledge of the past, there is knowledge of the future; there is knowledge also of ideas and the relations that they bear to one another, and the relations that ideas bear to what are not ideas. Things perceived and things remembered and things inferred are not infrequently overlaid and in a manner masked by ideas, but a difference is discernible: the idea of a sorrow is different from a sorrow felt or remembered or inferred; the idea of a house is different from a house perceived or remembered or inferred. What is known is not infrequently known dimly, but what is known dimly still is known. Even though the past "in the distance of years" grow all but featureless, what is cognized is still the past; even though the future "in the distance of years" be all but featureless, what is cognized is still the future. And things mental and things non-mental, past, present, future and conditional, are cognized within the outer limits of the Specious Present.

PART SECOND.

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THE ETHICS

OF

THE SPECIOUS PRESENT.

CHAPTER VII

THE MORALITY THAT OUGHT TO BE

I.

Il ne faut pas regarder le devoir en face, mais l'écouter et lui obéir les yeux baissés : it must be confessed that for writers on ethics that is a hard saying. It would not have been expected to become with them, of all men in the world, a ruling principle. One might have supposed one's self safe in predicting that the persons who accepted that maxim would not feel at liberty to speculate on morals, and that the persons who felt at liberty to speculate on morals would not accept that maxim. If it is a misdemeanour in the sphere of conduct to scrutinize our duties, it might seem to be in the sphere of thought a capital offence to profess to describe and to explain our duties without having scrutinized them. It is to the votaries of the intelligence doubly disconcerting to find these anticipations not only in fact unconfirmed but in principle explicitly controverted. "The moral consciousness is the touch-

stone of moral theories," Mr. Bradley once declared, formulating the creed in this particular of many inquirers in ethics who agree with him in little else; and the moral consciousness of which he spoke was that which is to be found in the mind of the plain man, the man who lives without having, or wishing to have, opinions of his own as to what living is or ought to be. "Nowadays, when all have opinions, and too many also practice of their own; when every man knows better, and does worse, than his father before him; when to be enlightened is to be possessed by some wretched theory, which is our own just so far as it separates us from others; and to be cultivated is to be aware that doctrine means narrowness, that all truths are so true that any truth must be false; when 'young pilgrims,' at their outset, are 'spoiled by the sophistry' of shallow moralities, and the fruit of life rots as it ripens—amid all this 'progress of the species' the plain man is by no means so common as he once was, or at least is said to have been. And so, if we want a moral sense that has not yet been adulterated, we must not be afraid to leave enlightenment behind us. We must go to the vulgar for vulgar morality, and there what we lose in refinement we perhaps are likely to gain in integrity."²

It is in great part at least by an appeal to this moral consciousness that the author of *Ethical*

² *Ethical Studies*, p. 3.

Studies endeavours to satisfy his readers of the insufficiency of hedonism as a theory of morals, and of the sufficiency, in comparison at least, of what is called by him the doctrine of My Station and Its Duties. "'My Station and Its Duties' teaches us to identify others and ourselves with the station we fill; to consider that as good, and by virtue of that to consider others and ourselves good too. It teaches us that a man who does his work in the world is good, notwithstanding his faults, if his faults do not prevent him from fulfilling his station. It tells us that the heart is an idle abstraction; we are not to think of it, nor must we look at our insides, but at our work and our life, and say to ourselves, Am I fulfilling my appointed function or not? Fulfill it we can, if we will: what we have to do is not so much better than the world that we cannot do it; the world is there waiting for it; my duties are my rights. On the one hand, I am not likely to be much better than the world asks me to be; on the other hand, if I can take my place in the world I ought not to be discontented."² And again: "What is that wish to be better, and to make the world better, which is on the threshold of immorality? What is the 'world' in this sense? It is the morality already existing ready to hand in laws, institutions, social usages, moral opinions and feelings. This is the element in which the young are brought up. It has given

² *Ethical Studies*, p. 164.

moral content to themselves and it is the only source of such content. It is not wrong, it is a duty, to take the best that there is, and to live up to the best. It is not wrong, it is a duty, standing on the basis of the existing, and in harmony with its general spirit, to try and make not only one's self but also the world better, or rather, and in preference, one's own world better. But it is another thing, starting from one's self, from ideals in one's head, to set one's self and them against the moral world. . . . We should consider whether the encouraging one's self in having opinions of one's own, in the sense of thinking differently from the world on moral subjects, be not, in any person other than a heaven-born prophet, sheer self-conceit." ² And again: "There cannot be a moral philosophy which will tell us what in particular we are to do, and also . . . it is not the business of philosophy to do so. All philosophy has to do is to 'understand what is,' and moral philosophy has to understand morals which exist, not to make them or give directions for making them. Such a notion is simply ludicrous. Philosophy in general has not to anticipate the discoveries of the particular sciences nor the evolution of history; the philosophy of religion has not to make a new religion or teach an old one, but simply to understand the religious consciousness; and aesthetic

² *Ethical Studies*, pp. 180-1.

has not to produce works of fine art, but to theorize the beautiful which it finds; political philosophy has not to play tricks with the state, but to understand it; and ethics has not to make the world moral, but to reduce to theory the morality current in the world. If we want it to do anything more, so much the worse for us; for it cannot possibly construct a new morality, and, even if it could to any extent codify what exists (a point on which I do not enter), yet it surely is clear that in cases of collision of duties it would not help you to know what to do. . . . In short, the view which thinks moral philosophy is to supply us with particular moral prescriptions confuses science with art."² And again: "To the question, How am I to know what is right? the answer must be 'By the αἴσθησις of the φρόνιμος;' and the φρόνιμος is the man who has identified his will with the moral spirit of the community, and judges accordingly. If an immoral course be suggested to him, he 'feels' or 'sees' at once that the act is not in harmony with a good will, and he does not do this by saying, 'This is a breach of rule A, therefore etc.:' but the first thing he is aware of is that he 'does not like it'; and what he has done, without being aware of it is (at least in most cases) to seize the quality of an act, that quality being a general quality. Actions of a particular kind he does not like, and

² *Ethical Studies*, pp. 174-5.

he has instinctively referred the particular act to that kind."²

There is however no apparent reason in the nature of the case for supposing the plain man's consciousness of moral facts to be less in need of criticism, correction, supplementation or displacement, than is the plain man's consciousness of physical or chemical or astronomical facts. The plain man's consciousness in the matter is in every case a part of the fact to be explained, but explained it may be, as they say, "away". One might as well accept the plain man's consciousness as the touchstone of opinion in order to disprove the sphericity of the earth or the heliocentric theory of the solar system, as to disprove the hedonistic or any other account of morals. The plain man's consciousness suffices at most superficially to identify—to identify in a merely preliminary way—the subject to be investigated. It must of course in fairness be added that the text of *Ethical Studies* admits this. Surprisingly enough it admits also, (its dialectic being of an extreme audacity), that *My Station and Its Duties* is but another portion, another aspect, of the fact to be explained. "I am not saying," the text runs, "that what is commonly believed must be true. I am perfectly ready to consider the possibility of the ordinary creed being a mistaken one; but the point which

² *Ibid.*, p. 177.

I wish to emphasize is this: The fact is the moral world, both on its external side of the family, society, and the State, and the work of the individual in them, and again, on its internal side of moral feeling and belief. The theory which will account for and justify (*sic*) these facts as a whole is the true moral theory; and any theory which cannot account for these facts, may in some other way, perhaps, be a very good and correct theory, but it is *not* a moral theory"¹—by which seemingly we are to understand a theory of morality. But it must in fairness be added also that these admissions are rhetorical only; or rather, no conclusions except those of the argument favoured in the text are permitted in practice to take advantage of them. The argument in *Ethical Studies* first makes a capricious selection of a part of the fact to be explained and treats it as the whole. It then, with delightful humour, conscious and unconscious, demonstrates that whatever else certain current theories of ethics so-called may explain and plain, they at least are not explanations simply solely of that segment of the fact in question—of the moral consciousness of the plain man. It then urges the superior claims of that segment to be regarded as an explanation of itself; "The theory which we have just exhibited," (*My Station and Its Duties* is, it appears, a theory!), "seems to us a great advance on anything we

¹ *Ethical Studies*, p. 82.

have had before, and indeed to be in the main satisfactory."¹ If the of the *αἴσθησις* of the *φρόνιμος* is to be the canon of what, in this kind, is satisfactory and what is not; and if the institutions embodying the conception of "stations and duties" in which the *φρόνιμος* has been reared are precisely what has determined his *αἴσθησις*—if he is precisely *φρόνιμος* so far and so far only as his *αἴσθησις* is an intenser essence of those institutions;—the result could not well be otherwise. "If a man is to know what is right," the text declares, "he should have imbibed by precept, and still more by example, the spirit of his community, its general and special beliefs as to right and wrong, and, with this whole embodied in his mind, should particularize it in any new case, not by a reflective deduction, but by an intuitive subsumption, which does not know that it is a subsumption."² "This intuition must not be confounded with what is sometimes miscalled 'conscience.' It is not mere individual opinion or caprice. It presupposes the morality of the community as its basis, and is subject to the approval thereof. . . . For the final arbiters are the *φρόνιμοι*, persons with a will to do right, and not full of reflections and theories."³ In the end there is urged the insufficiency of that segment

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

² *Ethical Studies*, p. 178.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

of the fact to serve as an explanation of itself, and the text proceeds to the consideration of ideal morality. To the man full of reflections and theories—to the votary in other words, of the intelligence—it does not appear why the insufficiency of that segment of the fact to serve as an explanation of itself should not from the outset have been manifest, nor why other theories of that segment should have been dismissed on the ground that they insisted on completing it, only in order that after their dismissal they should be replaced by another theory that insists on nothing more nor less than they insisted on.

2.

The moral consciousness of the plain man, it should indeed be noted, and the moral consciousness of the community, are not in fact the same, and are by no means in complete accord; unless the plain man, like the *φρόνιμος* of Mr. Bradley, be first defined as the man whose moral consciousness is in complete accord with the moral consciousness of the community. The plain man in that sense, Mr. Bradley, as has been seen, informs us, is by no means so common as he once was, or at least, is said to have been; the plain man in that sense, it might be affirmed more truly, is not existent, and has never been. The plain man's judgment is, even on Mr. Bradley's showing, different from

the judgment of the *φρόνιμος*, although different only that it may be subject to it: "the final arbiters," we have been told, "are the *φρόνιμοι*." "This intuition"—the plain man's intuition in any new case of right and wrong, whenever it is not misleading,—"must not be confounded with what is sometimes miscalled 'conscience.' It is not mere individual opinion or caprice. It presupposes the morality of the community as its basis and is subject to the approval thereof." In the moral consciousness of the plain man as he lives and breathes there exists, it will not be denied, that individual opinion about right and wrong which, Mr. Bradley says, is miscalled conscience; there exists also an opinion about the opinion of the community in which he lives—an opinion that this or that by the community in which he lives would be accounted right or wrong; it is this second opinion that may be corrected by an appeal to the accredited representatives of the community, the *φρόνιμοι*, or to the community itself. It is this second opinion which, to Mr. Bradley's mind, alone deserves the name of moral; but the question is for the moment not of the moral consciousness of Mr. Bradley, but of the moral consciousness of the plain man. In the plain man's consciousness the two opinions by no means coincide, and the second is by no means of unassailed authority. It is the plain man un-

informed, inattentive, unreflecting, to whom by Mr. Bradley we have been referred; but it may be doubted whether there exists or has existed a plain man so inapt for fine distinctions, if the ideas of moral and immoral be in his consciousness at all, (and it is for ideas of morality that we have been referred to the consciousness of the plain man), as not in one case or another to have discerned, or discerned at least as possible, a difference between what by the world in which he lives is accounted right and what according to his own belief is right—between, that is to say, the Morality that Is and the Morality that Ought to Be. A system of ethics that takes account of the moral consciousness of the plain man as he lives and breathes must therefore take account not only of the Morality that Is but also of the Morality that Ought To Be. And inasmuch as plain men live together in more communities than one, and these communities do not all inculcate the same moral laws, a system of ethics that takes account of the moral consciousness of the plain man, wherever he may be, must take account not only of a Morality that Is, but of Moralities that Are. And inasmuch as plain men differing in their belief concerning what is right from the community in which they live, do not all differ in the same points, nor from the judgment of the same community, nor agree with one another, a system of ethics that takes account of the moral

consciousness of the plain man, wherever he may be, must take account not only of a Morality that Ought to Be but of Moralities that Ought to Be. Nay, it must take account also of a belief sure to be present in the mind of the plain man, that there is a means of deciding rationally which deserves the preference among the Moralities that Are, and a means also of deciding rationally which indeed is *the* Morality that Ought to Be. And it must still further take account of the two senses in which the plain man, like other men, is in the habit of applying the word "good" to objects of desire, (of what should a system of ethics take account, if not of the meaning of such words as "right," "moral," "good?"): that in the plain man's judgment is in one sense good which serves the end in view—which serves, accordingly, to satisfy desire; and on the other hand that, only that, is good, which ought to be the object of desire.

All these distinctions present in the moral consciousness of the plain man it becomes the duty of the philosopher to scrutinize, putting every item of the plain man's beliefs sternly on its justification; it is the duty of the philosopher, that is to say, in ethics as in metaphysics to play the part of sceptic, or at least to summon the sceptic to his counsels, and hear him to the end. A science, a philosophy of any kind, so it seems clear to the votary of the intelligence, begins with

the investigation of things roughly classed together as fundamentally alike by the plain man. If the plain man's knowledge were from the first sufficient, there would be no reason for science or philosophy or special investigation to exist. Things roughly classed together by the plain man often prove on closer scrutiny, the plain man himself being judge, fundamentally unlike; things roughly distinguished by the plain man often prove on closer scrutiny, the plain man himself being judge fundamentally the same. Nor can it reasonably be affirmed that whereas morality has to do with practice the results of these investigations are without effect on practice. Neither science nor philosophy is necessarily competent to resolve our difficulties in a new case, an unfamiliar instance; our uncertainties may be uncertainties not with regard to principle but with regard to matters of fact. A science or philosophy, however, that does not inform us what in particular we are to do in every instance lying within its province, in which with perfect knowledge of the fact we still can be in doubt, is simply a science or philosophy still incomplete; and a science or philosophy that does not inform us what in particular we are to do in a number of instances in which without it we should be in doubt, is simply the science or philosophy of a subject, the special investigation of which has brought to light literally nothing not already of common knowledge. "Who would go to a

learned theologian as such," the author of *Ethical Studies* asks in scorn, "in practical religious difficulties: to a system of aesthetics for suggestions on the handling of an artistic theme; to a physiologist as such for a diagnosis and prescription; to a political philosopher in practical politics; or to a psychologist in an intrigue of any kind?" Who, it might as pertinently be asked, would go to a lawyer as such in a case of national dispute about the title to a piece of land? We should go to a lawyer as such if the point in regard to which we were in doubt were one of law; we should go to a theologian as such, or to a system of aesthetics, or to a physiologist, or to a political philosopher, if the point in regard to which we were in doubt were one of theology or aesthetics or physiology or political philosophy,—or rather, one of the theological or aesthetic or physiological or political significance of such and such admitted facts. Every scientific truth may be of service in practice—may, nay must, on every occasion in which the principle it states is applicable. The fact of the moral consciousness of the community, the fact of the moral consciousness of the plain man, suffices, on the most liberal interpretation that can be accorded it by the philosopher, to establish no more than that some such thing as moral obligation exists; that an as-yet-insufficiently-investigated-somewhat called moral obligation exists; or rather, like the

traditional apparition or ghost or spiritualist phenomenon, is in speech and practice recognized as existing. What the nature of the so-called moral obligation is, what in particular in any unfamiliar case it may turn out to be, what in particular even in any familiar case it may upon a more intimate acquaintance turn out to be, are questions to which the fact of that moral consciousness supplies in the last resort no answer; and the answer to those questions which the fact of that moral consciousness at first suggests may well prove to be the very opposite of the answer which is final. The precepts sanctioned by the moral consciousness of the community or by the moral consciousness of the plain man, may be adapted with utter unintelligence to the effecting of the end for which they were designed—to the realizing of the ideal existent in the moral consciousness of the community or in the moral consciousness of the plain man; and that ideal itself may stand condemned when tried by the ideal of what indeed is the Morality that Ought to Be.

3.

It is on the second meaning attached by the plain man to the word good that the sceptic with least hesitation fastens. Not all desires of like intensity, the plain man thinks, alike merit satis-

faction; there are things which ought and things which ought not to be desired. There are desires directed to things low and base, which are accordingly low and base desires; there are desires directed to noble things, which are accordingly noble or good desires: the noble is the good, and that is best which is intrinsically noblest. But when the plain man is asked. What is the test of nobleness?—his appeal is always (if it be not to revealed religion and revealed religion, is not here in question) to immediate knowledge: what is felt to be noble, what his heart goes out to, that is noble; what is felt to be noblest, that is noblest. It is a question each man finds decided for him by the cast of his own mind: it is a question therefore, to the plain man's own discomfiture, decided in different ways. Rational as distinguished from intuitive decision of the question "What is noblest?" there can indeed be none: to decide rationally which of all the things judged noblest is the noblest would be to decide by reference to some standard of nobility already established as supreme; and there is no such standard to be found.

It is to this immediate knowledge of the noble that the plain man is accustomed to give the name of conscience. By conscience indeed is sometimes understood an automatic signal placed by the Creator in man's breast to inform him when he is following and when departing from the will of

God; but when the plain man is not appealing to revealed religion, it is not to conscience in that sense that he makes appeal. Every man finds within himself a secret reverence for some special mode of life, some special attribute of character. It may be an attribute of character he never can possess, a mode of life he cannot follow; he may be a coward and reverence bravery, or a boor and reverence gentle manners. Whether he attain it, even whether he strive toward it or not, what he most reverences determines in the main his moral ideal. The ideal may be one of personal honour, or of chivalry, or of allegiance, or of love, or of religious devotion; whatever it be, the certainty that it is best, that its attainment is attainment of the ideal best, is for the plain man a matter of immediate consciousness—of conscience. Just as the eye is the test of the colour quality in things, so conscience is the test of the moral quality in things. But if each man's conscience is indeed the test of noble and ignoble, right and wrong, then there are as many standards of morality as there are individuals. Hermann's conscience by no means declares only what is for Hermann right or wrong: if Hermann's conscience sanctions duelling, duelling is sanctioned not alone for Hermann but for every man. The arrangement that each man shall obey the dictates of his own conscience, and leave other people to obey each the dictates of his own, is within certain

limits a measure of great practical utility, but it receives no justification from the theory that each man's conscience is the test of right and wrong. On the contrary, that arrangement is wrong in every one of the million senses of that word which the theory in question recognizes. If each conscience is the test of right and wrong, everybody is in strictness obliged to obey the dictates of everybody else's conscience quite as much as the dictates his own. Or is it suggested that in this case there should be taken a plebiscitum of consciences, and that right and wrong should be regarded as determined by majority vote? That arrangement may be, within certain limits, a measure of great practical utility, but it receives no justification from the theory that each conscience is the test, or even a test, of right and wrong. What is by three men judged right is by no man therefore judged more right; as what is by three men seen red is by no man therefore seen more red, but only is seen red more times. And what is by one judged right and by another man judged wrong, is by no man therefore judged midway between right and wrong but only is judged once right, once wrong; as what is by one man seen red and by another man seen green is by no man therefore seen of a colour midway between red and green, but only is seen once red, once green. Every action is or may be in the same circumstances right and indifferent and wrong, and this

without the smallest inconsistency: it is right according to one standard, indifferent according to another, wrong according to another, as the same object may weigh at the same time a pound and less than a pound if the first pound is reckoned in troy weight and the second in avoirdupois. Difficulty in logic there is none, but in action extreme difficulty; he who desires by the aid of reason to establish rules for action may well be content to seek a simpler system of morality, and turn for guidance to the first and more transparent meaning of the word good.

4.

Whatever be the end in view that end may fairly be described as the satisfaction of desire. That is good which serves the end in view—which serves to satisfy desire: if there is difficulty in determining what is noble, it seems that there should be at least no difficulty in determining what is in fact desired. And satisfactions of desire, we are assured, not only may be ascertained, but also may be compared: there exists a standard of comparison for satisfactions of desire. If the satisfaction of one desire is good, the satisfaction of that and of another desire is better, and the ideal best the satisfaction of all the desires of all mankind. If the disappointment of one desire is bad, the disappointment of that and of another

desire is worse, and the ideal worst the disappointment of all the desires of all mankind. Conduct, like all things else, may be estimated in this way. Conduct adapted to whatever end the agent may for the moment have in view is in the narrowest sense good conduct, inasmuch as it tends to satisfy what is at the moment his desire; conduct that tends to satisfy all the desires of the agent, taken as a whole, is in a broader sense good conduct; in the broadest and exactest sense good conduct, the best conduct, is conduct that tends to satisfy to the uttermost not only all the desires of the agent taken as a whole, but also all the desires of all mankind taken as a whole. And since morality is a matter of the will, it is in so far as conduct is intended to fulfil this last ideal that it is in the broadest and most exact sense moral.

It is a simple and a specious scheme; but the sceptic is not satisfied. Granted, he reasons, that the satisfaction of one desire is good, the question arises, good for whom? Obviously for him who receives the satisfaction, whose desire it was; let us say for me. It is affirmed that, if the satisfaction of one desire is good, the satisfaction of that and of another desire is better; but surely, that depends on whose desire the second one may be. If it too is mine, then no doubt the reasoning holds that the satisfaction of both is better than the satisfaction of either of them separately: the satisfaction of one desire of mine is good because

I value it; the satisfaction of that and of another desire of mine is better for a like reason—because I value it more. But suppose the second desire is Hermann's: then who values that satisfaction more? I? If I do, it will be because I too desire that the desire of Hermann shall be satisfied,—because, that is to say, a second desire of my own is satisfied thereby. Otherwise I shall not value it more. As the same reasoning applies to Hermann, it does not follow that either of us necessarily will value it more. It does not appear that, if the satisfaction of one desire is good, the satisfaction of that and of another desire is better, and the satisfaction of all the desires of all mankind the ideal best. What does appear is that the ideal best for me is to have all my desires satisfied, including of course my desires that the desires of certain other people shall be satisfied and disappointed in various ways; that the ideal best for Hermann is to have all his desires satisfied, including his desires that the desires of certain other people should be satisfied and disappointed in various ways; and so on. Here once more we have, not one ideal, but as many ideals as there are individuals. Good means a different thing in reference to every different person: means, in reference to me, what is capable of ministering to my desires—what suits my taste; means in reference to Hermann what is capable of ministering to his desires—what

suits his taste. And, moral conduct being conduct in intention good, there are as many senses of the word "moral" as of the word "good." Supposing that in given circumstances it is possible to do any one of several things, then conduct directed to the attainment of what I like the best is conduct supremely moral. But for Hermann conduct the directed to the attainment of what he likes best is conduct supremely moral; and what he likes the best may well be what I like the least. As virtually every course of action is offensive to someone and agreeable to someone else, there is hardly any course of action that may not with equal reason be pronounced both moral and immoral.

Or is it here again alleged that there may be taken a count, if not of heads, yet of desires, and that the individual ideals thus may be reduced to unity in a larger ideal? that doubtless, if I do not desire to have the desires of Hermann satisfied, the satisfaction of one of his desires in addition to that of one of mine will not for me be better, and doubtless, if Hermann does not desire that my desires should be satisfied, the satisfaction of one of my desires in addition to that of one of his will not for him be better, but that in any case it will be better for Hermann and me taken together: that the satisfaction of Hermann's desire is good because he values it, and that the satisfaction of my desire is good because I value it; that if there

are two satisfactions one is less than itself plus the other; and that the ideal best therefore needs must be the satisfaction of all the desires of all mankind? The answer is, that the satisfaction of two desires is shown to be better than that of one, in one sense when both desires belong to the same person, and in another sense when they belong to different persons: the satisfaction of two desires belonging to one person is better than that of either desire singly, in the sense of being by him more highly valued; the satisfaction of two desires belonging one to one person and one to another is better than the satisfaction of either desire singly, in the sense, not of being more highly valued but of being more times valued—valued by more people. What is seen red, it has been said already, is not seen redder because seen red by more people; it is only seen red more times. Suppose that there are four pictures and three critics, and that the critics all agree that the first picture is second best, but are all at variance about the other three, one holding the second to be best, and one the third, and one the fourth. Then the first picture is better than any of the remaining three, in the sense that it is valued by more people: and each of the remaining three is better and worse than the first picture; better in the sense of being more highly valued by the critic who regards it as the best, worse in the sense of being less highly valued by the critics

who regard it as among the worst, worse also in the sense, if in that sense we chose to speak of worse, of being valued fewer times. The general standard cannot be shown to be superior to the individual standards, because it cannot be shown to be superior to them in a sense of the word "good" by all those standards recognised—there is no one sense by all those standards recognised; and it cannot be shown to be superior to any individual standard in the sense of the word "good" by that standard recognised, because it cannot be more desired by Hermann than what *ex hypothesi* is by Hermann most desired. Nay, even if what is best according to the general standard were best also according to each individual standard, as palpably it is not,—even if what is most times desired were in fact by Hermann most desired, by me most desired, by everybody most desired,—the agreement would be a matter of coincidence, not of identity, of fact, not logic: the same thing would be best with reference to Hermann because it was by Hermann most desired, and best with reference to me because it was by me most desired, and best with reference to the general standard because it was most times desired. Instead therefore of reducing the multitude of standards to one, the general standard but adds one to their number: there were already as many standards as individuals, there are now all these and one besides.

And were an attempt made to apply in practice the general standard, it would be found impossible to apply except by the aid of such a simplification of the facts as would amount to falsification. The individual standards each compel the recognition of the inequality of objects of desire—their inequality for the same man at the same time and for the same man at different times, and so presumably for different men: the general standard compels the non-recognition of this inequality, on pain of moral paralysis. It might be possible, indeed, to count desires in different classes, and to record, so to speak, more votes in favour of the object desired with more intense desire—if only the classification of desires could be made: but by whom can it be made? So long as all the desires to be taken into consideration belong to the same person, there will be little difficulty: one line of conduct will tend to satisfy one of his desires and to disappoint another, another line of conduct will tend to satisfy still another one of his desires and to disappoint another; which of his desires is most intense he can no doubt tell easily, or if the balance stand even, it will be no matter which desire is satisfied. But suppose the desires to be satisfied and disappointed belong to different persons; and someone denies that Giles' desire for bull-baiting is the equivalent of John's desire for bread, or questions the equality of a gratification and a disappointment, or inclines to

the opinion that one man's desires from first to last are more intense than the desires of another man? To decide we must have been supplied with some common measure of desires: and the general standard supplies no such common measure; there is no such common measure. And whatever substitute we may devise will falsify to our own knowledge the computation of desires; and it will be according to this substitute that we decide and not according to the general standard. We may choose to decide, for instance, by observing how much force each puts forth in behalf of his desire; but we shall know soon as we consult our own practice and our own desire, that the force expended put forth is determined less by the intensity of the desire than by the force available, and by the seeming possibility of the attainment of the object of desire. We may choose to decide the question by imagination putting ourselves in the place of other men, and considering whether our desire for bull-baiting, were we in the place of Giles, would be more or less than our desire for bread, were we in the place of John; but we know so soon as we compare ourselves with Giles or John, that the desire which in his place we imagine we should feel is different in intensity from his. We may not have recourse to the device of counting desires without measuring them, because too clearly what would satisfy the most numerous desires cannot

be held to satisfy the most desire: it is probable that Giles, to satisfy his desire for bull-baiting, or John, to satisfy his desire for bread, stands ready to incur the disappointment of more than one more faint desire. But even could we rest content to count desires, not measure them, how should we count them? how be certain we have cognizance of every relevant desire of Giles and John? The desire for bread to which in speech or action John gives expression, the desire for bull-baiting expressed in action or in speech by Giles, is but one of many relevant desires existing in John or Giles—perhaps the liveliest, perhaps merely that judged easiest to satisfy: how ascertain the unexpressed desires of Giles, which conduct tending to the disappointment of the expressed desire for bull-baiting may satisfy or else not satisfy? how ascertain the unexpressed desires of John which conduct tending to the satisfaction of the expressed desire for bread may satisfy or else not satisfy? How ascertain, moreover, in this matter of Giles and John, all the relevant desires of unknown persons other than Giles and John? To apply successfully the general standard we must know the number and the relative intensity of the desires in question: their number we can never know we know; their relative intensity we know we do not know.

And the endeavour to apply in practice any of these standards, general or individual, is on whom

obligatory? On him obviously who has for aim what according to that standard is the ideal best. The particular precepts of each system do but designate the means toward the end to be attained; they stand toward that end in the same relation in which the precepts of hygiene stand toward the end of hygiene, which is health. If you are bent upon attaining health, and if the precepts of hygiene really designate the means toward that end, in disobeying those precepts you will show yourself unwise. The obligation to obey them is an obligation not to be foolish simply. But if you are bent upon attaining, not health, but something different from health, then the precepts of hygiene have no hold on you: it may well be that in disobeying those principles you do not show yourself unwise. And who has for end what according to the general standard is the ideal best? for whom is its ideal best an object of desire? For me? Not necessarily. For Hermann? Not necessarily. For Hermann and me taken together, or else for all mankind? But Hermann and I taken together are not the agents called on to choose a course of action: still less is all mankind. Injunctions in accordance with the general standard are therefore addressed to no agent, and are on no man obligatory. Nor will it in the least avail the moralist to declare that what according to the general standard is the ideal best should be the object of each man's supreme desire.

In the systems of morality that understand by "good" what serves the end in view, there are supplied no tests by which to judge of ends—it is at most suggested that the end in view may with advantage be attainable; there is no way of showing that anything should be desired which is not in fact desired. What each man desires is determined for him by the cast of his own mind—it is determined by his taste. Only in the systems of morality that understand by "good" what is intrinsically noble is there supplied a test by which to judge of ends: what is noble, that and only that, these systems say, should be the object of desire. But there is no way, as has been seen, of showing any man that anything should be by him found noble which is not in fact by him found noble; what each man finds noble is determined for him by the cast of his own mind—it is determined by his taste. Whatever end a man may choose, he will choose always to gratify his taste: he will seek always what he likes because he likes it: the very form of that ideal renders it in practice supreme.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MORALITY THAT IS.

IN those systems of morality which the individual might be tempted to prefer to the Morality that Is as Moralities that Ought to Be, the sceptic finds accordingly neither unity nor possibility of unity, nor yet constraining moral obligation. Only in the Morality that Is, it seems, can there be found the guidance sought by the plain man; only in the Morality that Is exists a force that can control the "thwarting currents of desire." Is the Morality that Is the sceptic therefore directs his scrutiny and the account of it he renders is as follows.

When a man lives with other men his conduct helps and hinders them in various ways in the attainment of their ends. They take means—it would be strange if they did not!—to make him practise the acts which help them and refrain from the acts which hinder them. These means are, of course, nothing else than their power to forward or to hinder him in the pursuit of his own aims—their power, speaking broadly, to reward or punish him; if he does not lend himself to

their purposes, if he sacrifices their ends to his own, they show their disappointment by wreaking vengeance on him. Whether the punishment will in the long run attain its object, whether it will in any given community prove effective in pretty generally deterring him from the kind of act in question, will depend in great measure on what kind of act it is. If, as has always been the case in every cluster of men yet known, some ends are commonly pursued in that community with more passion or more energy than other ends, and if the act is of a kind that ministers to the most cherished ends of those performing it and interferes at most with some of the minor ends of other people—if it is for the agent, so to speak, a matter of life and death, and an annoyance of small moment to other men, then the efforts of the latter to suppress it will in most cases be met with such vigorous and prolonged resistance that coercion will be felt to "be more trouble than it is worth," in especial, if the number of those interested in suppressing the line of conduct in question does not greatly exceed the number of those interested in pursuing it. If, however, one party does greatly outnumber the other, and has at stake interests not much, if at all, less cherished, it will generally have its own way, so far as that way can be accomplished by the quantity and quality of reward and punishment it deems "worth while" to set in operation. These are the two

constant factors that determine whether a certain kind of act will in the long run be put down in a given community: the greatness of the interest that the agents, and those who benefit with them, feel themselves to have in its performance, as compared with the greatness of the interest that "other people" feel themselves to have in its suppression; and the number of the agents, and those who benefit with them, as compared with the number of the "other people."

To deal with these two factors in an exact way is no doubt impossible; it cannot be said precisely how many people animated by some certain end will on the average be a match for a given number of people animated by another certain end. What can be said is that, other things equal, those who are more in earnest, or those who are more numerous, will win. A number of men desperately in earnest are, other things equal, more than a match for a somewhat greater number of men less in earnest, but are not a match for an indefinitely greater number. In the majority of cases a line of conduct will be suppressed which does to a community more harm than good, in the sense that it serves ends which are in that community less pertinaciously pursued, or pursued by fewer people, than those ends which it disserves. This is the only sense of the words "good" and "harm" recognized by a community not of course, in words, in public speeches, in the

public prints, but in effect: the good that a thing does any man is measured by the force he is prepared to bring to its accomplishment; the harm that a thing does to other men is measured by the force that they will put forth to suppress it. Obviously a man will therefore in most cases be compelled to refrain from acts which do him in this sense less "good" than they do other people "harm," and be compelled to perform those acts which do him in this sense less harm than they do other people good, the interest of those who sentimentally or materially benefit or suffer with the agent being of course in each case reckoned with his interest.

Now, people are susceptible of education—*Tout s'apprend* says the French sage, *même la vertu*. People learn in the course of time not to try to make one another do what they cannot succeed in making one another do, and not to try themselves to do what will not be permitted. A man learns to do what he has been punished, or has seen others punished, for not doing, and learns not to do what he has been punished, or has seen others punished, for doing: he comes to do with a sense of uprightness and of good-standing in society what he feels he will be approved for doing, and to shrink back from or else do with a sense of shamefacedness and secrecy, what he feels that he will be disapproved for doing. If, again, he has himself suffered from a certain line

of conduct on the part of other people, or has observed others suffer from it, and if on either account he fears in the future himself to suffer from it, he will be predisposed, independently of friendship for those he helps or of enmity to those he injures, to give aid and comfort to any movement of his fellows tending to make an example of whoever has offended in that way. With the lapse of time, that is to say, and the accumulation of experience, the members of a community become in a measure obedient to the general will; the community itself learns to act within bounds and to act in a measure as a unit. It becomes, generally speaking, the custom for the individual member of a community to refrain from lines of conduct which harm "other people"—the "community"—more than they benefit the agent and those whose interests are bound up with his; it becomes, generally speaking, the custom for the individual member to force himself to practise lines of conduct which benefit "other people" more than they harm the agent and those whose interests are bound up with his. It becomes also the custom for the community as a whole to unite in condemning, and if need be in punishing, whoever does not conform to these customs. The individual learns to anticipate the community's judgment in his own case, and to judge himself according to the same standards by which it has long since judged both himself and

others; he learns to judge himself according to the same standards by which he has himself long since judged others; for, as James Mill long since remarked, the judgment that somebody else's conduct is right or wrong is psychologically prior to the judgment that one's own conduct is right or wrong.

Not all the acts tending to the "harm" of the community as a whole are marked by the community for repression. Certain acts which it is to the advantage of other people that a man should practise or forbear, he practises or forbears already in the pursuit of his own aims. To mark such acts for artificial regulation by Society would be a bit of elaborate folly; they are perfectly "regulated" already. It is only when a certain line of conduct is repugnant to a man, that he need be forced to follow it; it is only when it is more to the advantage of the community as a whole than it is to the disadvantage of the agent—it is only when it does the community more good than it does the agent harm (in the sense of the words "good" and "harm" set forth already), that he *can* be forced to follow it. And a man can be forced, too, only in respect to his voluntary conduct, and in that only to the extent to which its consequences are incurred deliberately—are intended. It would be fruitless to punish any man for a congenital squint, or for a sallow complexion, or for lameness, or for the

results of conduct, in itself indifferent, that did not turn out as he expected. The utmost that can be done with people is to make them *mean* to do thus and so.

2.

Society, in other words, (it is the merest commonplace), is in a sense an organism as a human being is. When people live together, each strives to gain his own ends, but he is not permitted to do so uninfluenced; his conduct is modified in a thousand ways by the proximity of his fellows. His own desires constitute but one factor in shaping his activity; the other factor is constituted by the desires of those about him. Individual conduct ceases in a sense to exist, except as an abstraction; all conduct becomes in a sense, social. In theory the aim of all activity on the part of Society must plainly be to fulfil all the desires of all the associates; in practice, however, something less than this has of necessity to be put up with, the desires of different associates being incompatible; since, therefore, some one has to be sacrificed, Society sacrifices the weak to the strong. Other things equal, the many prevail over the few, and the vitally interested over the feebly interested; and the many prevail not because they are many, but because they are strong, and the vitally interested prevail

not because they are vitally interested, but because they are invincible. Society, when all is said, is but a "state of nature," in which individuals have learned to act together. The right of the strong arm is disguised simply, not abolished. When a man has to sacrifice all but one of several objects of desire, he keeps the one he most desires: if these terms may be employed with reference to Society, we may say that Society too seeks as final good the satisfaction of desire, but that its measure of desire is neither quantity nor quality, but simply the powers which that desire is shown to have at its command. Every desire exerts a certain sway over him who entertains it: so long as its sway is held in check by that of other desires of the same man, its satisfaction is from the stand-point of Society but theoretically "good;" Society has found itself under no practical necessity of establishing a standard for the comparison of merely contemplative desires. But the instant that a man sets out to satisfy his own desire, Society measures the relative value of the satisfaction of which he is in quest by the relation which the power put forth in its service bears to the power likely to be put forth against it. The desires of a man are, in the estimation of Society (judging always not by what Society says, but by what it does), of more importance than those of a woman; the desires of a strong man are of more importance than those of a

weak man; those of an energetic man of more importance than those of a dawdler; those of a rich man or a noble of more importance than those of a poor man or a commoner. The desires of each man are of course not necessarily at all points what is commonly called selfish, they are as a rule in part at least determined by one conception or another of what is for the benefit of other men; but the realization of any man's conception of what is for the benefit of other men is in the estimation of Society important only in so far as the desire thereby satisfied is the desire of a strong man. If a man gains in power, all his objects, from the point of view of Society, increase in value; more objects of other people will have to be sacrificed before his objects are. Two objects are better than one, whether they belong to the same person or to different persons; it is harder for Society to make one person sacrifice two objects than either object singly, and harder to make two persons sacrifice an object each, than to make either of them singly give up one. The principle of selection that Society inevitably goes upon, is that might makes right,—*τὸ δίκαιον οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ τὸ τοῦ κρείττονος ἐνυμφόνον*—and the Morality that Is but formulates in this particular the practice of Society. Social interference and adjustment apart, a man tends naturally to profit by the "wrong" he does and to suffer by the "right"—tends naturally to

profit by the "right" that other people do and to suffer by the "wrong." "Wrong" conduct is that by which the agent intends to profit himself, and those with whom he identifies himself, at the expense of Society; "right" conduct is that by which the agent intends to sacrifice himself, and those with whom he identifies himself, for the sake of Society; meaning by Society ("God," said Napoleon, "is always on the side of the biggest battalions")—the biggest or at least the most effective, battalions—the "majority" that "rules," or the indomitable incensed minority that will not be ruled. The moral code at any given time and place in force—the Morality that Is—is the sacrifice of the weak to the strong reduced to a system. Its precepts tend always, or are meant to tend, towards the attainment of this ideal.

On whom therefore are the precepts of a Morality that Is obligatory? On him, it seems, by whom the attainment of that ideal is desired—in this case on Society, meaning by Society the strong. And its precepts needs must be in essence statements of the means found serviceable for the attainment of its ends; and the obligation to obey them needs must be the obligation not to be foolish simply—the obligation to proceed intelligently toward one's chosen end. The Morality that Is proves on examination of the same kind with those individual systems of morality that recognise as supreme good the

satisfaction of desire, with the difference only that the individual concerned is in this instance a corporate body. Hermann and I taken together, it was said, are not an agent, still less is all mankind an agent; but Society is an agent; Society is a body corporate existing for purposes of action, and its action is the action of the strong.

The precepts of the Morality that Is purport, however, to be addressed not to Society but to the individual; to him by whom the attainment of its ideal is least desired; to the weak, not the strong. And here there is a distinction to be drawn. There are two series of injunctions belonging to the Morality that Is, one publicly set forth, one unexpressed. Those unexpressed are the direct, the first, injunctions of the Morality that Is, and are in fact addressed to Society. As from the injuriousness to health of impure air there issues for the individual bent on health the precept, Breathe no impure air, so from the injuriousness to the interests of the strong of theft there issues for Society the precept, Suppress theft. In obeying, Society addresses to the individual the command, Thou shalt not steal—a command belonging to the secondary, the indirect injunctions of the Morality that Is. These commands explicitly addressed by Society to the individual, and forming seemingly the Code of the Morality that Is, are in strictness not injunctions of the Morality that Is, but only the

injunctions which that morality directs shall be enjoined.

And the hold upon the individual of these injunctions? Suppose you say to him. Such and such a course of action is for the advantage of the strong—for the advantage of Society, and he makes answer, What is that to me? He may no doubt be told that the strong are representatives of a society of which he is himself a member, and that what is the advantage of Society is therefore his advantage also. In so far as he believes that, and on that ground obeys, he is but obeying the injunctions of his own individual system of morality; he is but seeking to satisfy his own desires. Or again he may be told that the proposed advantage is indeed primarily not his advantage, but that he shall have fair fame and ease if he obeys, and evil fame and punishment if he disobeys. In so far as he believes that, and on that ground obeys, he is but obeying the injunctions of his own individual system of morality—he is but seeking, in the circumstances thus by force created, to satisfy his own desires. But there is more in the injunctions which the Morality that Is directs shall be enjoined upon the individual, than the appeal thus made to the individual's own private ends. The command "Thou shalt not steal" is not in essence a mere statement that honesty is the best policy: it is not meant to run, Steal not, unless to steal be

possible with fair fame and without punishment; it is meant to run, and runs, Steal not at all. It is of the essence of the injunctions in this code that they demand the sacrifice of his desires to whom they are addressed. There are men no doubt to whom the injunctions in this code are as the voice of their own nature, or their second nature: they would not violate them if they might; they would find only unhappiness in violating them. But were all men of this kind, a separate morality of the community would never have existed; the distinction between acts in need and not in need of social regulation could never have been drawn. In obeying, these men are obeying the injunctions of their own individual systems of morality; they are doing as they themselves desire. The injunctions Society takes the pains to issue are addressed to him who in obeying will not be doing as he desires; the command "Thou shalt not steal" is directed to the would-be thief, not to the honest man. Where lies for him whose desires are set aside the obligation to obey? In the absence of any sanction from an individual system of morality, where for the individual lies the obligation to obey the precepts of the Morality that Is—to subserve, against his own desires, the interests of the strong? Inward obligation patently there is and can be none; there is an outward obligation only to surrender to the strong: there is the

obligation simply of submission to superior force.

3.

And the commands sanctioned by superior force are different in different societies, as the interests in behalf of which they are promulgated are also different; the case is the same for societies as for individuals, bodies corporate being, as has been said, but individuals of a certain kind: there are and must be as many Moralities that Are as there are societies. Nor is the word "society" to be regarded as a synonym for "nation." Wherever any organization whatsoever exists for purposes of action, that organization has a system of morals of its own. Whether the organization in question is a whist party, or a camping party, or a band of robbers or one of those great national associations that are called *par excellence* societies, the individual has always taken part for ends of his own, and other individuals have taken part for ends of their own: there is always some opportunity for the individual to shirk his portion of the common task, or to gain the end he has ostensibly in view more easily, or gain some other end that he thinks preferable, by sacrificing, in some fashion, the interests of other men: and against every form of this shirking or this sacrifice there is always a more or less explicit prohibition running from the society to

the individual, and sanctioned by the power of that society, or rather of the more numerous and effective individuals in it, to promote or hinder the attainment of the individual's ends. These prohibitions constitute in every instance the moral code of the society in question it, Morality that Is, no matter whether its membership be three, or thirty, or thirty million; no matter whether its object be amusement, or robbery, or murder, or the many-handed game of trade. It follows that there is almost nothing that is not from the points of view of the Moralities that Are at once right and wrong. Was it right to assist Robin Hood and Little John in highway robbery? It was right from the point of view of Robin and his merry men; it was wrong from that of England. There is no conflict in these two propositions: it is possible with flawless logic to assent to both of them: one act may well affect two different societies in different ways. Or it is said that Robin and his band were part of England, and were in England a minority? The robber band was organized for purpose of action quite contrary to the purposes of action for which the people of England have been organized: as well almost might a flea be called a part of the dog he lives upon, as a company of robbers be called part of the society on which they prey. Or is it said that the society of robbers had few members, and the society of

England many members, and that therefore what is right for England is "more right" than what is right for the robber band? The society of England has more members than the society of Portugal; is what is right for England on that ground more right than what is right for Portugal? Nay, is what is right for England and for France more right than what is right for Portugal? Not, assuredly, from the point of view of Portugal. There is no hope for any reconciliation of moralities along this line. In the societies that are the Moralities that Are all sacrifice the few to the many and the weaker to the stronger, but each only within the bounds of the society whose code it is: not one inculcates or allows the sacrifice of that society to whatever other society may prove more numerous or more strong.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PART AND THE WHOLE.

I.

Alike in the Morality that Ought to Be and in the Morality that Is there is revealed an utter conflict of injunctions and ideals, and in the sphere of the intelligence no ground on which to decide among them—nay, no ground even for desiring to decide. The conflict is practical, not speculative. There is no hindrance or let in logic to assenting at the same time to all the systems of the Morality that Ought to Be or all the systems of the Morality that Is, or all of both. They all use indeed the words "right," "wrong," "good," "bad," but they define them in different senses; and it is quite permissible to believe that the same thing is right in one sense and wrong in another, or right in half-a-dozen senses and wrong in others. The need for choice arises only when one comes to act. A man may in all consistency believe that—what you will—is right in one sense

and that the precise opposite is right in another, but what must he do? It is for the speculative moralist an affair of taste. No matter what he does, he will equally from the point of view of the intelligence do wrong, and equally do right; he may do as he likes, may take his choice—*must* take his choice. The craving for an authoritative rule, an outer prop and stay, is one that the intelligence can never fill; the instinctive wish to ease the burden of one's life, to shift in a manner the responsibility of choice, to escape the mortal isolation of facing the world alone with nothing but one's inclination for a guide, must go ungratified. One object, no matter how abhorrent to one's self or what, is in the eye of logic as good as any other to the man who values it as highly; there is no central, superior, over-reaching standard of conduct or morality, there is only greater inclination—and superior force. The only title that Society or anybody can have to interfere with anybody else is superior might; men and societies must in the last resort stand frankly to arms and give as their reason for coercing one another their simple determination to have things the way they want them. This is Society's position at once in relation to its own members, and to aliens, and to other societies, and the position of individuals in relation to the world and to one another. And for a man of any masculine vigour, (even sceptical morality is not wholly

seamy-side), it might be supposed that this after all should be enough—a certain not unwelcome simplification even of the problem—an abridgment of the sphere of casuistry and futilities and preliminaries. Such a person is not likely to find himself appalled at the discovery that he is standing on his own feet, nor to feel an inner sinking and a need of some imperative external curb to hinder him from doing anything abominable. It is something, he may feel, upon the side of dignity and energy “that no such curb, no “outer prop and stay,” exists; that he is free to do as he likes because he likes it—and to take the consequences. He will naturally deprecate the effort to make him look upon his case as tragic, but if positively he must so regard it he may well take refuge in the not unmanly stoicism of Sarpedon, and reply simply—“Onward!”

Only it must not be imagined that the sceptic in matters ethical has as yet done justice to his premises, or that a person of his accomplished logic may stop short in his deductions before he has pushed them to the end, or may permit himself, in reliance, as Bentham would have said, on question-begging appellatives, to accept a capriciously chosen aggregate as an individual—as for others strictly speaking *the* individual. Society, it has been said, is an organism; and the individual also (the individual!), it has been assumed, is an organism: the argument has

vindicated the claims of the social atom against the social organism; it should by parity of reasoning vindicate the claims of the atoms organized in “the individual.” “Granted,” it was urged, “that the satisfaction of one desire is good, the question arises, good for whom? Obviously for him who receives the satisfaction, for him whose desire it was, let us say for me.” “If the satisfaction of one desire is good,” the argument continued, “the satisfaction of that and of another desire is better; but surely that depends on whose desire the second one may be. If it too is mine, then no doubt the reasoning holds that the satisfaction of both is better than the satisfaction of either of them separately: the satisfaction of one desire of mine is good because I value it; the satisfaction of that and of another desire of mine is better for a like reason—because I value it more. But suppose the second desire is Hermann’s, then who values that satisfaction it more? I? If I do, it will be because I too desire that the desire of Hermann shall be satisfied; because, that is to say, a second desire of my own is satisfied thereby. Otherwise I shall not value it more. As the same reasoning applies to Hermann, it does not follow that either of us necessarily will value it more. It does not appear that, if the satisfaction of one desire is good, the satisfaction of that and of another desire is better, and the satisfaction of all the desires of all mankind the ideal best.

What does appear is that the ideal best for me is to have all my desires satisfied, including of course my desires that the desires of certain other people shall be satisfied and disappointed in various ways; that the ideal best for Hermann is to have all his desires satisfied, including those that the desires of certain other people shall be satisfied and disappointed in various ways, and so on. Here once more we have not one ideal, but as many ideals as there are individuals¹ the individuals in this argument intended being individual men. But a society and *a fortiori* what the text suggests, "humanity as a whole," is no more really resolvable into individual men, than is a man into individual "moments" of consciousness. If there is a distinction to be marked, as upon the simplest inspection of the facts there plainly is, between the society, its interests and aims, on the one side, and on the other the individual members of that society, their interests and aims, which may or may not in any particular respect or even on the whole coincide with the interests and aims of that society; there is a distinction no less legitimate, no less obvious, to be marked between a man's "present" interests and aims and his "future" interests and aims, and between his interests and aims at any one "moment" and his interests and aims "upon the whole." Whether we assent or not to the doctrine that "Myself is a collective

Supra, p. 270.

simply for the variety of things I love;" whether we admit or not the actuality of a single spiritual somewhat underlying my shifting moods, as an οὐσία ἀχρώματιστος, ἀσχημάτιστος, ἀναφής has been alleged to underlie the shifting "phenomena" of the world of matter and motion; so much seems clear:—(a) That considered from the point of view of a mistaken metaphysics, (and it is only out of the presuppositions of a mistaken metaphysics that there arises the occasion for considering it at all), a single spiritual somewhat underlying each man's shifting moods but contributes to the number of the repellent individuals it is commonly invoked to reduce to unity;¹ and (b) That if it is possible always for the individual man in some measure to sacrifice his fellows, or the society of which he is a member, to himself, it is possible always ("Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die!") for the present moment in some measure to make itself richer, fuller of such stuff as is in itself of value, at the expense of certain subsequent moments, and, it may be, of the man as a whole. If it be said that thus to resolve the individual into moments involves the absurdity that it may be one moment which desires and another which is satisfied, and one moment which sins and another which is punished; the answer is, that it is hard to see the point in logic of calling any statement absurd that precisely affirms the plain

¹ *Supra*, p. 161, 165.

facts, and hard too to see how in this respect the analogy between the individual and the society can be supposed to fail. The visitation of the sins of the fathers upon the children is in either case beyond denial. The satisfaction of one desire of myself of the present moment is good because and in so far as myself of the present moment values it; the satisfaction of that and of another desire of myself of the present moment is for the like reason better than the satisfaction of either desire separately; myself of the present moment values the double satisfaction more. But suppose that the second desire, or at least the satisfaction to be accorded to the second desire, belongs to some moment of myself other than the present; then what moment values it more? Myself of the present moment? If myself of the present moment does, it will be because myself of the present moment has, (and it may have nothing of the kind—moments of indifference and recklessness are, in point of fact, only too well authenticated), a disinterested interest in myself of that moment, desires the well-being of myself of that moment, finds a present satisfaction in anything which it regards as making that well-being certain, precisely as a man may have a disinterested interest in the well-being of his own posterity or generally of other men, may find a present satisfaction in anything which he regards as making that well-being certain; it will be because, that is, a

second desire of myself of the present moment is thereby satisfied. Otherwise myself of the present moment will not value it more; and as the same reasoning may be made to apply to any other moment of myself, it results that the satisfaction of two desires, one belonging to myself of one moment and one belonging to myself of another moment, will not as such necessarily be valued more than that of either singly. To say that two moments value it and that it is in that sense valued more, and valued more therefore by myself "as a whole," would be to fall again into the confusion already pointed out between being valued more highly and being more times valued. If the satisfaction of one of my desires is in and of itself good, the satisfaction of two of my desires is better, in one sense if both desires belong to the same moment of myself, and in another sense if they belong to different moments; the satisfaction of all the desires of one moment of myself is in one sense the ideal and in another sense is not the ideal—in another sense is not so good as the satisfaction of all the desires of that moment of myself and of another moment of myself besides. The ideals of the individual moments of myself are not, and cannot in logic be, in this wise subordinated to the ideal of myself as a whole, because that ideal is not and cannot be shown to be superior to them: to be shown superior it must be shown superior in a sense of the word

"good" by all those standards recognized, and there is no one sense by all those standards recognized. The ideals of the individual moments each require the word "good" to mean what is capable of satisfying that one moment of myself, and the word "better" to mean what is capable of satisfying that one moment of myself still more; the ideal of myself as a whole requires the word "good" to mean what is capable of satisfying any moment of myself, and the word "better" to mean what is capable either of satisfying any moment more or of satisfying more moments. Not only so: the ideal of myself as a whole is in logic impossible to obey without such a simplification of the facts as amounts to a falsification. One's duty in obedience to that ideal is to take the line of conduct which under the given circumstances will satisfy the most desires, the desires disappointed being taken into account as an offset. But suppose that the lines of conduct to be selected from cause disappointment to one moment and satisfaction to another, and disappointment in one thing and satisfaction in another? If one desire, no matter which or to what moment it belonged, were to be taken as equal to any other desire, no matter which or to what moment it belongs, then there would be in logic at least no difficulty. It might be impossible in any given case to ascertain all the desires of mine which the several lines of conduct will respectively satisfy and disappoint;

(it was an absurd overstatement to say, that "so long as all the desires to be taken into consideration belong to the same person, there will be little difficulty . . . which of his desires is most intense he can no doubt tell easily, or if the balance stand even, it will be no matter which desire is satisfied; still, it is at least conceivable that on those terms the conditions of right judgment should be fulfilled." But suppose an inner voice denies that a desire for bull-baiting is the equivalent of a desire for bread, or questions the equality of a satisfaction and a disappointment, or points out that the desires and sensibilities of one moment are indefinitely keener than those of another; how is myself of the present moment, as the representative of myself as a whole, to decide and in deriding to recognize these idiosyncrasies which it will falsify its judgment to ignore? To do so, myself of the present moment must have some means of ascertaining how much keener the desires and sensibilities of any given moment of myself are than the desires and sensibilities of any other given moment; and whether the desire of moment number one for bull-baiting will not in fact be more than the equivalent of the desire of moment number two for bread; and how much of one moment's satisfaction is a just offset for how much of another moment's disappointment. There is needed a common measure of desires, and there exists no such common measure; and

whatever substitute may be desired will falsify the computation of desires. And so on, to the last limit of the parallel. All the objections, that apply to any effort to use the Benthamite calculus between individuals, apply equally to any effort to use it between different moments of the "same" individual. The argument which obliges us to recognize the individual man, his desires, his private ideals, and taste, as insusceptible in logic of subordination to ideals of wider or of different scope, obliges us also by parity of reasoning to recognize the individual man's self of the moment, his Specious Present, its desires, its private ideals and taste, as insusceptible in logic of subordination to the ideals of the man as a whole. Whatever can be urged to prove that one is free morally as an individual to do as one likes because one likes it, and to take the consequences, may be shown *a fortiori* to prove that one's self of any given moment is free morally to do as it likes because it at that moment likes it, and—for the most part to escape the consequences!

2.

Say rather—*Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem!*—it may well be with a smile that the sceptic recognises the presuppositions of his scepticism, and in ethics as in metaphysics yields the victory to the naive realist. If there is a limit to

the logical coercion the human intelligence can bring to bear in support of its conclusions in other matters of practice or theory, no reason appears why it should be required in the matter of ethics to operate with an efficiency of which elsewhere and in itself it is confessedly incapable. To exact of one's moral judgment the kind of certainty that is to be found only in *ὁ ἐκάστῳ ἐκάστοτε δοκεῖ*, is but a special case of exacting that kind of certainty from one's judgment generally. To object that in the matter of goodness and the satisfaction of desire, one's self of the moment is the standard—that in any effort to pass beyond the moment one is still within the moment and applying inevitably the standard of the moment, is but to require in the theory of morals the employment of the canon of knowledge which results in all other matters and not unnaturally in ethics also in a scepticism and solipsism of the Specious Present. One's self of the moment recognises perfectly the validity of memory and inference; one's self of the moment recognises perfectly that it is but a part of a whole. What the secret nature of that whole is,—whether or not that whole possesses a nature which is secret,—the self of the moment may or may not know; but that that whole is "real," and that, whatever its secret nature may or may not be, its overt nature is such and such, and that the self of the moment bears to the other moments of the self relations of value and of other kinds than

value, the self of the moment knows in memory and expectation and the simplest exercise of the "mathematical" intelligence. The judgment that two moments of one's conscious life, one's inner self, are equal in value, presents no greater or other logical difficulties, and (material aids to precise measurement apart) no greater or other practical difficulties, than the judgment that at those two moments one's physical self was in height or weight or what you will the "same." The judgment that if one should take "this" rather than "that" course of action the consequences will be more satisfactory, involves no logical difficulties whatsoever beyond those involved in the bare judgment that if one should take this or that or any course of action consequences of some kind, of any kind, will (or will not!) ensue. There is no greater or other difficulty in taking cognizance of moments of one's self other than the present, or of moments of selves other than one's own and in comparing them, than in taking cognizance of and in comparing any other matters whatsoever not perceived or felt by the present self.

The mathematical intelligence is not merely "personal," its judgments are not those of the self of the moment only but also of an ideal spectator; one may ascertain and compare the "sentimental" claims of any two moments of one's self or of two moments of different selves, precisely as one may

ascertain and compare the market value of corn at two different periods of time in the same place or in two different places at the same period of time; and one's judgment need as little in the one case as in the other be a matter of sheer personal caprice. This is a fact that in the present state of opinion it is difficult to state too explicitly or to insist upon at too great length. The market value of corn at any time or place is itself a "sentimental" fact, and sentimental facts oppose no logical obstacle to ascertainment and comparison which other facts do not oppose. We have as good means, we have in all essentials the same means, of ascertaining how much keener one man's desires are than another's, and how much keener a man's desires are at one moment than at another, and how much of one person's or one moment's satisfaction is an offset for so much of another person's or another moment's disappointment, we have of ascertaining how much barley is at a given moment worth so much rye, or how many tons of such and such an ore will yield as many penny weight of gold as will be yielded by so many tons of such and such another ore. Nor can any use be made of the distinction between quality and quantity to break down the analogy; distinctions of kind as well as of intensity and volume are matters of present knowledge or of memory or inference. The objections regarded as fatal to the use of the

Benthamite calculus across the dividing line between the selves of different moments might be urged with equal force of logic, if not of rhetoric against the feasibility of any use whatever of applied mathematics; and the objections regarded as fatal to the use of the Benthamite calculus across the dividing line between the selves of different moments are in logic if not in rhetoric the "same" as the objections regarded as fatal to its use across the dividing line between individual and individual. The self of the moment may be reckless of the claims of the selves of moment's later than its own in the whole of which it is a part, precisely as the individual man may be reckless of the claims of other men; and, whether reckless or not, the self of the moment may be unable to ascertain or to estimate the claims of the selves of other moments in the same whole with "metaphysical" exactitude, with an exactitude excluding the possibility of doubt, precisely as, whether reckless or not, the individual man may be unable to ascertain or estimate the claims of other men with an exactitude excluding the possibility of doubt; but neither can mathematics be applied to the estimation of apples or of sacks of corn with an exactitude excluding the possibility of doubt. That one equals one, no matter which the first or the second one may be, is no more and no less true of apples and sacks of corn than of desires; the demand for a metaphysical

exactitude is a demand for an exactitude in the bad sense metaphysical, a demand once more for the precision of intuition in an operation of discursive reasoning. With such exactitude as belongs to discursive reasoning, with the utmost exactitude of which the only sort of intelligence is capable that deals or can deal with the problem at all, the self of the moment can both ascertain and estimate the claims, the satisfactions and the disappointments of the selves of other moments in the whole of which it is a part; and whether reckless or not, or determined or not to be in practice reckless, of those claims, may be constrained in logic, however reluctantly, to pronounce them equal or superior to its own; and whether reckless or not, or determined or not to be in practice reckless, of the claims of other individuals or other moments in the lives of other individuals, may be constrained in logic, however reluctantly, to pronounce the claims of those individuals or moments equal or superior to its own or to the claims of the whole of which it forms a part; and this pronouncement, this judgment, constitutes precisely the intellectual element—the element of right reason—in morals, by ignoring which the sceptic in his argument concerning the Morality that Is and the Morality that Ought to Be succeeds in mystifying the plain man—and not only the plain man. It is the phraseology of the Morality that Is, the morality of the community, that

dominates, where conduct is concerned, our common parlance; it is conduct in which the claims of other selves are wrongfully ignored which in that parlance is alone called wicked; conduct in which the claims of the self are wrongfully adjusted or wrongfully ignored, is in that parlance called foolish simply. In either case, inequitable dealings with the claims involved is a matter of demonstrable fact, of knowledge. There are moments no doubt worth all the rest of life—worth, where the self only is concerned, whatever in their service needs must be withdrawn from moments yet to come; but in cases where the part does not exceed the remaining whole—in cases in which the self of the moment has and can have in possession little that is in itself of value, and the whole self or other moments of the self may possess much, a man knows in the mere disinterested play of his intelligence, he knows however reckless he may be, that in so far as he sacrifices the whole self to the self of the moment he is, to the point of demonstration, foolish. And in so far as, in cases where the selves of others also are concerned, he sacrifices to his own trivial interests grave interests, or interests that may well be grave, of other men, or being himself a person of but little consequence, sacrifices to himself persons of not so little consequence, he knows in the mere disinterested play of his intelligence, he knows however reckless he may

be, that he is to the point of demonstration wicked. What is called wickedness in the agent is in essence that—a disposition, where the self and others are concerned, in the interest of the self consciously to sacrifice the more important to the less important; what is called foolishness in the agent is in essence that—a disposition in matters, in which the self only is concerned, consciously to sacrifice the more important to the less important. And foolishness and wickedness are alike immoral.

3.

The moral judgment deals with matters of fact no less exclusively than the mathematical judgment. A man's perception that he is being wicked is attended by a specific emotional reaction, a sense of guilt, which may or may not be so marked as to control his conduct; so also is the perception that he is being foolish attended by a specific emotional reaction, called "feeling like a fool," which may or may not be similarly marked; but in the one case as in the other the judgment is the foundation of the emotional reaction, and not *vice versa*. He does not judge his conduct to be silly or wicked because he feels foolish or guilty; he feels foolish or guilty because he judges his conduct to be silly or wicked; and the judgment is in both cases an affair of pure intelligence, in

no wise mysterious, in no wise except in its subject matter different from any other judgment whatsoever. Writers who urge with Mr. Balfour that to say "one ought to do so and so," at least does not affirm that one has done or is doing or will do so and so, appear to have mistaken simply the fact declared. Unless the testimony of memory and inferences to be set aside, the satisfaction of the desires of myself of other moments is as such not of less value than the satisfaction of the desires of myself of the present moment; unless the testimony of perception, memory and inference is to be set aside, the satisfaction of the desires of other men is as such not of less value than the satisfaction of my own desires. That course of action is best from which there will result the greatest possible excess of satisfaction over disappointment of desire, to whomsoever the satisfaction may belong: the course of action that is best is the right course of action. To say one "ought to do so and so" is merely in other language to affirm, not indeed that one has done or is doing or will do anything, but that the effect in the given circumstances to be expected from such conduct on one's part is the utmost possible excess of satisfaction over disappointment of desire. To say "one ought to do so and so," declares simply that conduct of such and such a kind is right, is best—is in the circumstances the best conduct possible. To object that

that declaration carries with it the implication that one ought to do right, is to make a mystery of a substitution of synonyms. If a man asks what he ought in any given case to do, you convey no information by replying that he ought to do what is right. To ask what one ought to do is simply to ask what is right; to ask what is right is simply to ask what one ought to do; "ought to be done" and "right" and "best" are different modes, simply, of expressing the same thing.

Is it asked for whom the best, according to this standard, is in fact best? It might as well be asked, for whom two and two make four. In the one case as in the other, the answer is, for every intelligence competent to take cognizance of fact—of the real world. Is it asked by whom this ideal best is chosen, is most desired? The answer is, that this ideal best is independent of the choice of any man. What are cognized are indeed desires, and satisfactions and disappointments of desires; but the existence of desires and the relations that they bear to one another are by no man's desire determined; it is knowledge of that existence and of those relations that is knowledge of right and wrong. This ideal best would remain no other than it is, were it by no man chosen; this ideal best would remain no other than it is were, it by every man disliked; in the reasoning by which it is established there is question only of its power

universally to bind; there is no question whatsoever of its power universally to charm. There are beyond doubt persons who on particular occasion dislike this ideal, and in their dealings leave it out of account; there are persons also who on particular occasions dislike the fact that two and two make four, and in their dealings seek to ignore it. Neither mathematics nor law nor morals has choice or liking a central part to play: two and two make four, one's legal obligation is as it stands written in the tables of the law, one's moral obligation is determined by the nature and the circumstances of all the selves, including one's own self in any given case concerned, in neither mathematics nor law nor morals has even one's knowledge, one's intelligence, a central part to play. The intelligence does not make the world that the intelligence reveals; the intelligence does not create the quality for good or harm that it discovers in an act. To argue that it is by means of our intelligence that we take cognizance of right and wrong, of satisfaction and disappointment of desires, and that therefore the appeal in matters ethical is not to fact but a reason, is but to repeat the argument that whatever is cognized is cognized by the intelligence, and that whatever is cognized is therefore in nature mental. To argue that it is by means of our intelligence not only that we cognize an act as right or wrong, but also that we are able to perform it, and that without

possibility of performance as well as knowledge of the nature of the act there exists no moral obligation, and that therefore right and wrong are matters in essence mental, is by parity of reasoning to assert that because without the use of legs or arms it would in many instances be impossible to cognize an act as right or wrong and also impossible to perform it, therefore right and wrong are matters in essence muscular. It is neither more nor less as beings possessed of reason than as beings possessed of nerves and muscles that we are bound. We are bound to perform certain actions, if we find them possible, because those actions are in their own nature good: they are not good because they are possible,—there are possible to us many actions that obviously are not good. Conduct is in its own nature good or bad, whether or no it be by any man found possible, the results naturally attendant on it being what they are. Conduct is in its own nature good or bad, whether its results be or be not known to any man, the results actually attendant on it being what they are. Conduct is in its own nature good or bad whether its results were or were not by any man intended, the results actually attendant on it being what they are. Conduct, on the other hand, is in intention bad or good, whether its results have been rightly or wrongly calculated, the results intended being what they are. A good will is a will believed by the man who wills directed to-

ward good conduct ; it is the intention that is good or bad according to the act intended, not the act intended that is good or bad according to the will. The measure of goodness lies in either case in the results, in the case of conduct, in results actual or inevitable, in the case of intention, in results intended :—in an excess certain or proposed of satisfaction over disappointment of desire.

Is it said that not all acts admittedly performed under the impulse of a good will have been acts believed by the agent to be in accordance with this ideal—that there have been acts admittedly performed with a good will not for the satisfaction but for the disappointment of desire ? The answer is, that where the acts so described have been performed under the influence of a fear of hell or of a hope of heaven, the end pursued has been precisely the subordination of the less important to the more important in the satisfaction of the individual's own desires ; and that where the acts so described have been performed in deference to a divine will rather than in fear of hell or hope of heaven, the end pursued has been precisely the subordination of the less important to the more important in the satisfaction of the desires of the individual and of others, or at least one other, far more important than himself—the subordination of desires faint and wavering and fugitive to the supreme and everlasting desires of God : the fulfilment, in the phrase inseparable from the ideal

in question, of the pleasure, of the will, of God.

Is it said that not all the virtues recognized by the plain man can be included within the scope of this ideal ? that there is a place indeed for justice, but none for generosity, for self-devotion ? The answer is, first, that there is within the scope of this ideal as much and as little place for generosity, for self-devotion, as within the express terms of that compendium of morality which the plain man of our own race has been accustomed to regard as final : Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is to be discovered in that formula, considered strictly, as little sanction for the arbitrary subordination of the interests of the self to smaller or even equal interests of others as for the arbitrary subordination of the interests of others to smaller or even equal interests of the self. The answer is, secondly, that the praise of generosity, like that of prudence, has its foundation in the nature of our human instrument of knowledge. It is among the defects in our instrument of knowledge that the desires of the selves of other moments tend to appear less important than the desires of the self of the present moment ; the prudent man is he who habitually allows for this defect in his instrument of knowledge, or in whose instrument of knowledge this defect exists in less than the usual degree. It is among the defects in our instrument of knowledge that the desires of other selves tend to appear of less importance

than the desires of the self; the generous man is he who habitually allows for this defect in his instrument of knowledge, or in whose instrument of knowledge this defect exists in less than the usual degree. It is possible, of course, in any given case that the allowance made may be excessive, or that there may be in the instrument of knowledge defects not allowed for that tell upon the other side: it may happen—it does happen—that the prudent man unduly sacrifices the present to the future, and that the generous man unduly sacrifices the self to other selves; but at least the chances are against it: the besetting sins of human nature are of a different kind. The chances are that it is the generous man who has made due allowance for the defects of his instrument of knowledge—who has known the facts aright. Nay, among the facts themselves there is one fact forever tending to turn the balance on the side of what is called the generous deed; namely the desire in men that the goodwill of other men shall be shown towards them. The satisfaction of desire at first sight equal are not equal really. The man who gives a cup of water to another no thirstier than he, has not simply transferred a satisfaction of desire from one man to another without altering the sum of satisfactions of desire; there is satisfied in him who drinks not only the desire for water but also the desire for goodwill shown him, as by his answering goodwill there may be satisfied in him who gives the same

desire. It is better that one man should drink a cup of water given in kindness than that another man should drink a cup of water that is his by chance; there is in the draining of the cup of water given in kindness more satisfaction of desire. What is transferred has in the transfer gained in value; it is in the nature of generosity thus by the creation of new values to increase the excess of satisfaction over disappointment of desire.

CHAPTER X.

THE UNIT OF ETHICS.

The unit of ethics, it has thus far been assumed, is within the limits of a single moment of a single self the least appreciable satisfaction of desire: the unit of ethics is accordingly, it seems, determined by desire. But is the good in truth to be identified with that which satisfies desire? Is it by virtue solely of the existence of a desire which it satisfies that within the limits of a single moment of a single self what is good is good?

It is desired, surely, because it is first judged good: because of a goodness in it, not indeed perceived, but remembered or inferred. What may truly be affirmed is not that that is good which satisfies desire, but that that is by each man believed good which he believes will satisfy his own desire: he believes that it will satisfy his own desire because he believes it good; did he not believe it good it would not be the object of his own desire. That which has been the object of his own desire is not by each man necessarily, alas, found good. Very obviously we desire innumerable things that are not good, things that the instant we come to know them we know to be of quite other nature: we have got what we wanted and do not want it now that we have got it, and the assertion that at least in the very instant

of our getting it there is necessarily a certain satisfaction, even if a satisfaction in duration and degree infinitesimal, might well in practice be dismissed with the rejoinder "*De minimis non curat lex*" were it not possible, as it is too plainly possible, outright to deny it. There is instance after miserable instance—who has been so fortunate as not to have his share of them? who has been so fortunate as to forget his share of them?—in which the attainment of the object of desire is in its absolute beginning a beginning of bitterness and of chagrin: and that too by no means because the object when attained seems to us not the object that we wanted, or seems to us in its own nature other than we had fancied it to be, but very simply because we do not like it, do not value it, as we thought we should. We judged it good because we thought that when attained it would be valued, we desired it because, we thought that when attained it would be valued: we do not judge it good because we know it to have been desired. Or is it alleged that what has been in truth desired is the object attained *and* liked, attained *and* valued, and that the object attained, not liked,—attained, not valued,—is not in truth the object wanted, and that in such instances there is accordingly no satisfaction of desire? If the object of desire is never a bare object, but always is an object welcome, and an object not upon attainment welcome never can have been or be the object of desire, it

follows with the greater clearness that desire is determined by welcomeness upon attainment supposed or real, not welcomeness upon attainment by desire. That is desired which we believe good, that is believed good which we believe will be upon attainment welcome; that is found good which is found to be upon attainment welcome: that which is upon attainment welcome is the good.

Nay, there is by no means an infallible concurrence of desiredness and goodness: everything desired has been first believed to be upon attainment welcome: not everything found upon attainment welcome has been first desired. The most welcome things of life not seldom come to us and are recognized for what they are without having for an instant been desired—in despite even of our strong aversion: it is the case especially with those austerer blessings which the moralist as such is most concerned to render less unalluring than at first we find them; it is the case with those great loves and loyalties which, detaching us from all things previously desired, take command of us and of our powers as by right of the best within our knowledge. And it is without prelude of desire, surely, that what is found welcome is found welcome by the newborn child. Indeed it seems plain to demonstration that we never know or can know what we want till we have stumbled on it, or had it pointed

out to us, and found by experience, or inferred from previous experience, that it is upon attainment welcome; except on a theory of pre-established harmony that beggars belief, how should we, how could we, know in the beginning what things are likely to be upon attainment welcome and what are not, or even that anything is ever welcome—that anything deserves to be desired?

The unit of ethics therefore, it would seem, is within the limits of a single moment of a single self the least appreciable welcomeness; the unit of ethics is accordingly determined by the sense of welcome. To this sense of welcome the hedonist has given the name of pleasure—a name not wholly to the liking of the moralist, nor yet of the plain man. The word pleasant has in truth associations not identical with those of the word good. It is the phraseology of the morality of the community, as has been said, that dominates, where morals are concerned, our common parlance. In the Morality that Is, that only is selected to be praised as good in which the self is sacrificed to others; and pleasantness assuredly is not synonymous with sacrifice of self. The Morality that Is, however, being a morality of the community, deals exclusively, it behooves us to remember, with a plurality of selves and with relations among those selves. The question here is of the unit, not the sum of

ethics; the question here is of what constitutes the gain of every single moment of a single self. It cannot be the loss of every single moment that constitutes the gain of every single moment; it cannot be the loss of every single self that constitutes the gain of every single self. Within the limits of a single moment of the single self, considered singly, there is no room for sacrifice of self to others, or of any moment of the self to other moments of the self; there is no room therefore for the terms which the Morality that Is has made a portion of our common parlance; there is room only for such terms as suit an individual system of morality, and in that system are of application to the single moment of the single self.

And within the limits of the single moment of the single self what is found pleasant is found welcome; who, asks the hedonist, can doubt it? and to be found welcome is to please. It is alleged indeed that many things are welcome that are not pleasant, and many things desired of which we know that on attainment they will not please. "It is a calumny on men," we have been told, "to say that they are roused to heroic action by ease, hope of pleasure, recompense,—sugar-plums of any kind, in this world or the next. . . . Difficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death are the allurements that act on the heart of man." But manifest by that there is a confusion of

meanings here. The plain man knows well enough that in our daily speech two senses at the least are attached to the word pleasure; the plain man knows well enough what is intended by the saying that without its pleasures life would be a pleasant thing. Certain things supposed to be most men and at most times pleasant, are denominated pleasures; they do not always please. Certain things supposed to be to most men and at most times unpleasant, are denominated pains or hardships; they do not, always displease; there is evidence rather that some of them are to persons most susceptible of pleasure pleasing in a supreme degree. "As our Admirals," it has been written, "were full of heroic superstitions, and had a strutting and vain glorious style of fight, so they discovered a startling eagerness for battle, and courted war like a mistress. When the news came to Essex before Cadiz that the attack had been decided, he threw his hat into the sea. It is in this way that a schoolboy hears of a half-holiday: but this was a bearded man of great possessions who had just been allowed to risk his life. Trowbridge and the ship which he commanded, the *Culloden*, were unable to take part in the battle of the Nile, and Nelson wrote to the Admiralty as follows: 'The merits of that ship and her gallant captain are too well known to benefit by anything I could say. Her misfortune was great in getting a-

ground, while *her more fortunate companions were in the full tide of happiness*. The expression is noteworthy, and serves to characterize the whole great-hearted big-spoken stock of the English Admirals to a hair. It was for Nelson to be in the full tide of happiness to destroy five thousand five hundred and twenty-five of his fellow-creatures, and have his own scalp torn open by a piece of langridge shot. We hear of him again at Copenhagen: 'A shot through the mainmast knocked the splinters about; and he observed to one of his officers with a smile, 'It is warm work, and this may be the last to any of us at any moment;' and then, stopping short at the gangway, added, with emotion, 'But, mark you—I would not be elsewhere for thousands.'" There was an end doubtless to be attained by the battle of the Nile and by the battle of Copenhagen—the good of England; without some such end in view Nelson would have foregone the pleasure of the fray: but no man competent to grasp the meaning of words can fancy that the moment of battle was for him a moment of pain suffered for the sake of gain to England that should follow after—that there was no sheer pleasure in that single moment of his single self. There are the born heroes to whom such reputed hardships are in effect sheer pleasure; and the world in general proves its kinship with them by the sympathy that they inspire. The same temper,

the same estimate of pain and pleasure, is shown where pleasure is avowedly the only aim. It is recorded of Ashton Smith, of fox-hunting celebrity, that when almost eighty years of age, "only two years before he died, he had no less than three falls in one day, and was none the worse for them;" and that "in the heyday of his fame his average of falls was from sixty to seventy a season." "Throw your heart over and your horse is sure to follow," was one of his maxims; and another was, "There is no place that you can't get over with a fall."

Or is it said that so-called pain and hardship may be welcome also where they are not pleasure but in very truth are hardship and pain? The answer is, that here again there is confusion of meanings: that in such cases they are welcome only in the sense in which we are accustomed to call welcome a lesser evil, or a means; and that a lesser evil is not in strictness welcome, but only less unwelcome; and that what is welcome only as a means is not in strictness welcome; what is judged welcome being the end proposed and not the means. Is it said that so-called pain and hardship which in very truth are pain and hardship, are at least willed and are in so far welcome? The answer is, that men beyond all question will the lesser evil and the means to their proposed ends: that there is a difference between what is done voluntarily and what is done gladly—a

difference too often masked by the ambiguous word "willingly:" that what is willed is not judged always welcome, nor what is judged welcome always willed. Indeed we may more properly be said to will the means towards our end than to will the welcomeness which is our end, the welcomeness is independent of our will and sways our will to make election even of unwelcome means. The hedonist as such is concerned only with the definition of the good, the welcome; he is in no wise concerned to prove a perpetual concurrence of volition and belief in welcomeness; he is in no wise pledged to maintain the paradox of the inherent and inalienable goodness of the will.

Is it alleged that where the end proposed is proposed because it is believed pleasant, and the means adopted are as means only welcome, and in themselves are and are known to be sheer hardship and pain, the end proposed is not infrequently believed to be to one man pleasant and the means are by another man adopted; and that therefore it is not for the sake of future pleasure that he to whom those means as means are welcome welcomes hardship and pain? The answer is once more that what is as a means and a means only welcome is not welcome; the means in question are not welcome—they are only willed. The end is welcome, even if not welcome to the self—is pleasant, even if not pleasant to the self; the hedonist is in no

wise concerned to show that nothing but the pleasure of the self can be an end—can sway the will; least of all the hedonist who has refused to accept the solipsism of the Specious Present. Within the limits of a single moment of the single self, considered singly, there is room for pain and pleasure, there is room for action, there is room for will: there is no room for any motive for the will: volition looks towards the future. He who, in cases where the self only is concerned, is said deliberately to sacrifice the present to the future, does in truth but sacrifice the nearer future to the remoter future: he who in cases where the self and others are concerned, is said deliberately to sacrifice the self to others, does in truth but sacrifice the self of another moment to another self of another moment. It is never in the interest of the self of the present moment, it is always in the interest of the selves of other moments or of other selves that what is willed is willed. The limits of the single moment of the single self are as walls pierced with windows, revealing here and now what lies beyond the limits of the here and now—revealing in other moments of the self or other selves the presence of pleasure or of pain. It is the pleasure and the pain of future moments of the self or of other selves that sway the will: it is pain and pleasure not in the narrower sense intuited, not felt, but inferred. Is it alleged that to infer the pleasure of a future moment of the

self, or of another self, is within the limits of the present moment of the self a pleasure, and that accordingly it is the pleasure of the present moment of the self that sways the will? The pleasure of the present moment of the self is what it is, whether or not we will. The pain or pleasure of the present moment is beyond reach of our endeavour; if, as theologians and philosophers have not infrequently declared, it may be doubted whether omnipotence itself have power to change the past, it may no less reasonably be doubted whether omnipotence itself have power to change the present: assuredly no such power lies in any human will. In so far as the pleasure of inferring the pleasure of a future moment of the self or of other selves is not ours already and accordingly without effect upon the will, it is a pleasure belonging not to the present moment but to a future moment subsequent upon the moment of an act of will; it is itself accordingly a pleasure not felt but inferred. The pain or pleasure of the present moment, like the pain or pleasure of remembered moments, in matters that concern the will serves simply as a fact from which the pleasure or the pain of future moments may be inferred. Within the limits of a single moment of a single self that is felt to be good which is felt to be to the self pleasant; that is inferred to be good which is inferred to be to an inferred self pleasant; felt pleasures and felt pains as such are wholly indifferent to

the will. The will acts in the interest of the inferred self or rather selves, not of the self in the narrower sense intuited: the will acts in the service, ill though it may execute that service, of the intelligence that sees the whole. It is by this intelligence that sees the whole that the ideal best is known for best; it is by this intelligence that sees the whole that that is known for good which is upon attainment pleasant, to whatever moment of whatsoever self the pleasure may belong. The intelligence that sees the whole is far from seeing the whole perfectly; there are defects—need it be repeated? in the human instrument of knowledge, and the defects in our instrument of knowledge are reflected in the operations of our will. There are defects also, as it seems, in the adjustment of will to knowledge; there may be knowledge—knowledge even of the pleasant and unpleasant—without desire or will, as also there may be desire without will. But there is no will without knowledge, real or supposed, perfect or imperfect, of what in some moment of some self will be upon attainment pleasant or unpleasant; or is it to be believed that anything can be an end and as an end can sway the will, which neither is nor is supposed to be upon attainment pleasant or unpleasant of God or man or any sentient thing? On the other hand, not the defects only but the excellences of our instrument of knowledge are reflected in the operations of the will. It is among the defects of our

instrument of knowledge, as has been said already, that the pains and pleasures of a nearer future moment tend to appear greater than the pains and pleasures of a remoter future moment; and that the pains and pleasures of the self tend to appear greater than those of other selves: nevertheless the pains and pleasures of remoter future moments and of other selves, though cognised imperfectly, are cognised; what is seen dimly still is seen. And nothing is in its own nature necessarily without effect upon the will which is known to be in howsoever small a degree or howsoever remote a future, pleasant or unpleasant to God or man or any sentient thing. There is no more curious result of the deliberate sophistication by philosophers of the naive realism of the plain man than the attempt to demonstrate that whatever pleasure sways the will is pleasure felt by the self that wills. It is never pleasure felt by the self that wills—so much has been shown already; it is always pleasure cognised as belonging to future moments of the self or future moments of other selves.

But, we find it argued, at least the pleasure that sways the will is always pleasure belonging to the future moment of the self and not to future moments of other selves; when we will to sacrifice a future moment of the self to a remoter future moment of the self, it may indeed be for the sake of the inferred pleasure of that remoter moment of the self, and not solely for the sake of the in-

ferred pleasure of inferring it in some nearer future moment, that the sacrifice is undergone: but when we will to sacrifice a future moment of the self to a future moment of some other self, it is for the sake, not of the inferred pleasure of that moment of the other self, but solely for the sake of the inferred pleasure of inferring it in some future moment of the self: how else but as a pleasure of the self, these reasoners seem to ask, could any pleasure be known for pleasure, or in the charmed circle of the self exert a sway upon the will; how got the apple in? The answer is twofold: in the matter of sheer fact, the appeal is—how should it not be?—to experience, in the matter of possibility, the appeal is to the metaphysics of the Specious Present. The pleasure of another self is known for pleasure in precisely the same way in which the pleasure of a future moment of the self is known for pleasure—by inference, which is one mode of the intelligence of which intuition, in the narrower sense so-called, is also but a mode; and inferred knowledge—inferred knowledge only—has power to sway the will. Is it debated whether the inferred pleasure of another self in fact does sway the will? Within the charmed circle of the self what pleasures are believed equal are in influence equal: let us take counsel with the man who for the sake, seemingly, of others' pleasure, stands ready in his proper person to encounter hardship and pain. Let us

offer him, for his sole motive, in some future moment or moments of the self some inferred pleasure in his judgment equal to the inferred pleasure of inferring the pleasure of those other selves; it is not likely that for that motive we shall find him ready to encounter hardship and pain; it would be a contemptible economist of pains and pleasures that could not hope to fill his future moments with the pleasure of inferring pleasure and the pleasure of imagining pleasures at less dear a price. Let us offer him, for his sole motive, in some future moment or moments of those other selves some different pleasure in his judgment equal to the pleasure on their part he first inferred; it is not unlikely that for that motive we shall find him still as ready to encounter hardship and pain. Nay, sudden death for others' sake he is not seldom found prepared to suffer, with swift curtailment of all moments of the self in which the pleasure of those other selves could be inferred. It is by no means necessarily his own pleasure that has been the end proposed nor yet that is the end attained: he has undertaken to procure at the price of his own pleasure another's pleasure, and punctually he has procured another's pleasure and his own pain. How indeed should the pleasure of inferring another's pleasure be to him of greater value than the pleasure of imagining another's pleasure, to be enjoyed by him without the payment of any price

at all, were his choice not swayed by the discernment of a value in the thing inferred? There exists no golden hocus-pocus whereby sacrifice of the pleasure of the self is made forever impossible to man, and the price proffered, precisely because proffered, never is really paid. Rather the inferred pleasure of the future moment is inferred to be incompatible with the inferred pleasure of another future moment: we renounce one good to secure another: we weigh advantages, we give and take. Sometimes it is the pleasure of a future moment of another self that is renounced; sometimes the pleasure of a future moment of the self. For the hedonist as such it is sufficient that the good renounced is pleasure and the good for the sake of which it is renounced is also pleasure, to whatever moment of whatever self the pleasure may belong.

"The question to which I should welcome an answer," Mr. Bradley writes, "is this: Why should the hedonist seek to deny the worth of everything other than pleasantness?" Because exactly what the hedonist conceives himself in the word pleasantness to have discovered is an appropriate general term for that welcome-ness upon attainment which is the essence of all worth; and in the word pleasure an appropriate general term for that sense of welcome which accordingly is the test of worth. In our common parlance and therefore in the parlance of the

hedonist also, pleasant things and pleasure pass alike, it should be noted, under the name of pleasure, and painful things and pain alike under the name of pain; the more innocently because there is little danger of confounding the two meanings of the words. Is it urged that even although what is upon attainment welcome always is upon attainment pleasant, the name by which we call it might more fitly be a graver name? The name matters little, even to the hedonist, and less to the plain man: what is important is that the name shall not be discarded for reasons that mislead. So grave a name the common denominator of things welcome must not be as not to suit what even in the least degree is welcome it is of the essence of a general name to mark inclusion only not distinction, and to be indifferently applicable to the least and to the greatest of the kind. The least appreciable pain, the least appreciable pleasure, assuredly are no grave matters; the greatest and most lasting pain, the greatest and most lasting pleasure, are grave—what well could be more grave? There are light pleasures and important pleasures: it is the mark of the foolish man to choose light pleasures and of the wise man to choose great and lasting pleasures; of the foolish man to be sedulous in the avoidance or removal of light pains, of the wise man to be sedulous in the avoidance or removal of great and lasting pains.

Nevertheless the least appreciable pleasure has its value—the least appreciable value. Empty and vain no pleasure is, unless indeed we understand by pleasure what our current speech sometimes misleads us to understand. “What is your pleasure?”—so the question sometimes runs which asks a man’s desire or will; “what you please,”—so runs the phrase which means what you desire or will. What pleases us is in so far of worth, being in so far welcome; it may be bought by far too dear, but still the worth of what is bought is real: what we please may well be of no worth at all. Desire and will are at the best but grounds of inference concerning what will be upon attainment welcome, and, taken apart from other grounds of inference, are known not seldom to mislead. What things are, singly or in combination, upon attainment welcome, and in what degree, and in how many moments of how many selves, and of what selves, the human race has in the lapse of ages in some measure ascertained, and may hope in the lapse of ages with an ever greater precision and exhaustiveness to ascertain. His will is best who in such matters is most bent on knowledge and most submissive to his knowledge, in impulse and in deed abiding loyally under the empire of fact.

THE END.

hedonist also, pleasant things and pleasure pass alike, it should be noted, under the name of pleasure, and painful things and pain alike under the name of pain; the more innocently because there is little danger of confounding the two meanings of the words. Is it urged that even although what is upon attainment welcome always is upon attainment pleasant, the name by which we call it might more fitly be a graver name? The name matters little, even to the hedonist, and less to the plain man: what is important is that the name shall not be discarded for reasons that mislead. So grave a name the common denominator of things welcome must not be as not to suit what even in the least degree is welcome it is of the essence of a general name to mark inclusion only not distinction, and to be indifferently applicable to the least and to the greatest of the kind. The least appreciable pain, the least appreciable pleasure, assuredly are no grave matters; the greatest and most lasting pain, the greatest and most lasting pleasure, are grave—what well could be more grave? There are light pleasures and important pleasures: it is the mark of the foolish man to choose light pleasures and of the wise man to choose great and lasting pleasures; of the foolish man to be sedulous in the avoidance or removal of light pains, of the wise man to be sedulous in the avoidance or removal of great and lasting pains.

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THE END.

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Adversaries of the sceptic

W. J. Gordon Jr. Jan 1922

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